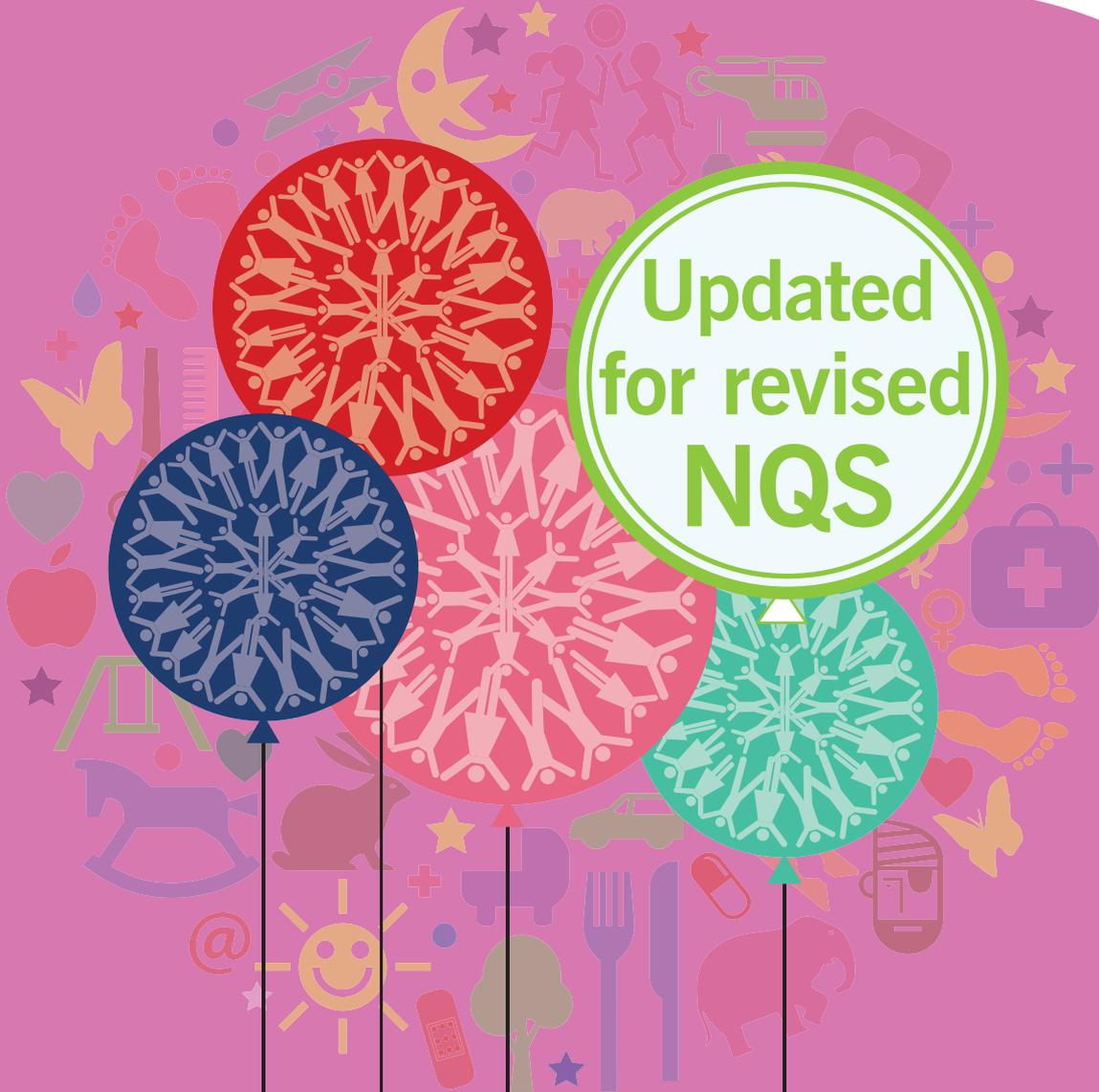


CHCECE021

Implement strategies for the inclusion of all children

Release 2



Updated
for revised
NQS

Learner guide



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learning resources

CHCECE021

Implement strategies for the inclusion of all children

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1



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CHCECE021 Implement strategies for the inclusion of all children, Release 2



© 2018 One World for Children Pty Ltd
407–411 Thompson Road
NORTH GEELONG VIC 3215 AUSTRALIA
Phone: (03) 5272 2714
www.owfc.com.au

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© 2018 Aspire Training & Consulting
Level 1, 464 St Kilda Road
MELBOURNE VIC 3004 AUSTRALIA
Phone: (03) 9820 1300

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE021 Implement strategies for the inclusion of all children*, Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into practice. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where QR codes appear, you can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help. 
Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There are learning checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

1A Promoting inclusion and participation

1B Planning for inclusion and participation

Promoting inclusion

Every child should be acknowledged and supported to achieve their full potential. These values are embedded in the curriculum design, and should flow through the daily activities and experiences of your service. They ensure that children of different backgrounds and with special needs can be successfully included and encouraged to participate with other children.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
✓	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
✓	Cultural competence
✓	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
✓	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

1A Promoting inclusion and participation

Inclusive practice embodies the basic human rights of every child and adult to participate in society, and have their culture and needs acknowledged and respected. This practice is incorporated in legislation, educational frameworks, standards, policies and procedures, and should be included in workplace practices. Promoting the inclusion and participation of all children is an important role of every educator.



Including everyone

In the past, children with disabilities were separated into specialist services or excluded altogether. Children from different cultures and religions were exposed to western culture and expected to conform: there was no acknowledgment of their own background and traditions. The needs of disadvantaged children were often overlooked, so these children missed out on quality services. As a result, these children often did not receive the support and resources required for them to reach their full potential.

In education and care services, inclusion involves providing access to a wide range of learning opportunities and environments. It also involves supporting the social and emotional development of children, and facilitating the participation and collaboration of families, practitioners, specialists and the community. This approach involves learning about the needs of each child, developing a plan for action, and implementing, monitoring and reviewing outcomes.

Human rights conventions and legislation

Not so long ago, anyone who had a physical disability, lacked competency in the English language or came from a disadvantaged background was considered to be inferior. Fortunately, these attitudes are changing. In recent years, there has been significant social movement promoting the rights of people with disabilities, and celebrating the multicultural nature of modern Australian society.

The concept of inclusion in education and care services is part of a broader human rights agenda. Human rights conventions and laws include:

- ▶ *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)
- ▶ The United Nations (UN) Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959)
- ▶ *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- ▶ *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth)
- ▶ The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
- ▶ Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- ▶ National Quality Framework (NQF).

Principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- ▶ The Convention applies to every child, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion and abilities, whatever they think or say and no matter what family they come from.
- ▶ Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.
- ▶ A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life in conditions that promote dignity, independence and an active role in the community. Governments must do all they can to provide free care and assistance to children with disabilities.
- ▶ Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.
- ▶ Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country they live in.
- ▶ Every child has the right to relax, play and join in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.
- ▶ Children who are neglected, abused, exploited, tortured or victims of war must receive special help to recover their health, dignity and self-respect.

These principles are fundamental to all inclusion philosophies and policies. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has also been a major influence, changing social perceptions of people with disabilities from needing charity and protection to being equal members of society with the same rights as anyone else.

National legislation, standards and guidelines

The values and principles of these international conventions have long been embedded in our national legislation and standards. These documents, which provide guidelines for curriculum, enrolment and participation, include:

- ▶ Education and Care Services National Law
- ▶ Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ▶ NQF
- ▶ National Quality Standard (NQS)
- ▶ *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF)
- ▶ *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTOP)

You can access these documents at: <http://aspirelr.link/nationalqualityframework>

In addition, funding for education and care services is linked to priority of access guidelines. These guidelines set out priorities that determine who is most eligible for service:

- ▶ The first priority is a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- ▶ The second priority is a child of a single parent, or where both parents are working, training or studying.
- ▶ The third priority is any other child. Children fitting this priority are not guaranteed a place and must be asked to vacate a place if a child or family of higher priority requests care. (The family must be notified of this possibility when first entering care and must be given at least 14 days' notice of the need to vacate.)

Within these priorities, there are further guidelines in which children are prioritised for care based on whether they are from:

- ▶ families of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin
- ▶ families that include a person with a disability
- ▶ low-income families
- ▶ families from a non-English-speaking background
- ▶ socially isolated families
- ▶ single-parent families.

On 2 July 2018 a new government funding system will override current subsidies and new priorities may be introduced. You can find the updated information on the Department of Education and Training website: <http://aspirelr.link/det>

Service philosophy, policies and procedures

Legislation requires that the principles of inclusion, equity and diversity are embedded into your service philosophy, policies and procedures.

Actions to take to ensure these principles are acted upon include:

- ▶ increasing the ability for all children to participate
- ▶ implementing policies that do not exclude children
- ▶ valuing equality
- ▶ using differences to support play and learning
- ▶ supporting educators, as well as children and families, to learn
- ▶ learning from mistakes and issues that arise
- ▶ acknowledging that the inclusive actions in your service represent inclusive actions in the wider community and society.

Philosophy, policies and procedures aim to ensure the practices outlined in the following table.

Inclusion	Equity	Diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Eliminating discrimination, particularly at enrolment, through accessing guidelines for education and care services ▶ Allowing all children to access the same level of education and care through the same service types ▶ Reflecting on children of all abilities as active participants that need education and care for the same reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All children have a right to fair, non-discriminatory education and care. Enrolment policies must reflect this. ▶ To ensure that equity is provided, you need to acknowledge that inequality exists. ▶ By being aware of inequality, you are ready to act and provide equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Diversity is the rule, not the exception; your practice needs to respect this. ▶ Each person/family is different, so policies and procedures must allow you to provide for these differences. ▶ Diversity must be recognised as valuable to the service; the service philosophy should state that diversity will be celebrated and used as an educational tool.

Inclusive practice for children with additional support needs

Inclusive practice is about finding equitable and effective ways to ensure that all children have opportunities to achieve learning outcomes. This is an ideal that should flow effortlessly from international conventions to national legislation and standards, to workplace philosophies and policies into workplace practice. It is your job to make this happen.

As an early childhood educator, it is your role to assist, support and encourage all children and their families to feel included and able to freely participate as valued members of the group.



You will encounter children with different backgrounds and experiences. You may also meet families and children in exceptional circumstances or with additional support needs. Have a good understanding of each situation and how these affect your role as an educator. At times, this will mean contributing to individualised, child-centred and/or family-centred planning and service delivery.

Watch this video about working with a child who needs additional support.



Useful strategies to implement with children who have additional support needs are described in the following table.

Additional support need	Possible implications for the educator
A child with behavioural or psychological disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Employment and leadership relating to additional support educators ▶ Developing or researching new or redeveloped strategies for guiding behaviour ▶ Contact with support networks, referral bodies, specialists and family advocates ▶ Additional action toward developing a secure, understanding and trusting relationship with the child ▶ Additional stress when dealing with children who have behaviours of concern ▶ Supporting parents and/or other carers of the child in developing guidance strategies ▶ Adapting experiences to enable the child to participate

Additional support need	Possible implications for the educator
A child at risk of harm or illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contact with support networks, referral bodies, specialists and family advocates ▶ Possible legal involvement, recording, reporting and presenting information ▶ Priority of access – the child has first priority placement so other children may be required to vacate a position to allow the child to access your service ▶ Additional action toward developing a secure and trusting relationship with the child ▶ Supporting parents and/or other carers of the child
A child with difficult family circumstances and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contact with support networks, referral bodies, specialists and family advocates ▶ Researching strategies for supporting the family ▶ Supporting parents and/or other carers of the child ▶ Possible legal involvement, recording, reporting and presenting information ▶ Empowering families to move forward and resolve issues
A child with health problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contact with support networks, referral bodies, specialists and family advocates ▶ Supporting parents and/or other carers of the child ▶ Additional education and training ▶ Maintaining specific environmental requirements (such as a nut-free service, no contact with particular materials or spaces, etc.) ▶ Adapting experiences to enable the child to participate
A child with a physical, sensory, hearing, visual or speaking disability or developmental delay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Employment and leadership relating to additional support educators ▶ Contact with support networks, referral bodies, specialists and family advocates ▶ Supporting parents and/or other carers of the child ▶ Additional education and training ▶ Maintaining health needs ▶ Adapting experiences to enable the child to participate
Children learning English as a second language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Employment and leadership relating to additional support educators ▶ Researching and learning key words in a new language ▶ Contact with support networks, referral bodies, specialists, family advocates, interpreters and translators ▶ Additional action toward developing a secure, understanding and trusting relationship with the child ▶ Supporting parents and/or other carers of the child ▶ Adapting experiences to enable the child to participate ▶ Communicating in nonverbal ways

When children are excluded, they tend to have little confidence in themselves and lack a positive self-image. The best way to support their positive emotional and psychological development is to spend time with them and demonstrate that they are worthwhile.

Children with low self-esteem

Useful strategies to implement with children who have low self-esteem and a poor self-image are described in the following table.

Strategy	How to implement
<p>Help the child develop an accurate picture of themselves, their abilities and their behaviour.</p>	<p>Encourage and demonstrate that their abilities are appropriate. Talk positively about the child's work, provide appropriate measures and eliminate competition with others. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have children measure their achievements against themselves rather than against other people. They will see their improvements and gain enjoyment from the process. ▶ Rotate games and group activities so that skilled players are not always central. All players should assume an important role in an activity they are involved in. This may mean changing the rules or developing a new game out of an old one.
<p>Make sure standards are not set too high or too low.</p>	<p>To get the balance right, observe the children regularly and ensure you are aware of their skill level. When a child can do something with support, there is a window of opportunity you can take advantage of. If you respond to this by supporting their skills, the child will be challenged. If you do not notice the window of opportunity, they may become frustrated and feel negatively about the activity.</p>
<p>Encourage children to reward themselves and discourage negative self-talk.</p>	<p>Support children by giving them the words to use and by telling them what you think. Celebrate achievements and help children see that a mistake is just another way to learn.</p>
<p>Redirect the child's inaccurate or confused beliefs about themselves.</p>	<p>These beliefs usually occur when the child makes generalisations about their abilities, personal appearance or anything else they feel is important, or when they believe they should think, feel or act in a particular way. Children constantly receive messages about these things. As they observe others being praised or encouraged, they absorb images of how they should act or how people of a certain culture look or behave.</p>

Self-esteem and self-image are often developed indirectly as a child is provided with experiences that:

- ▶ are successful and rewarding
- ▶ meet their individual interests and strengths
- ▶ provide for success.

Confused or inaccurate self-image

In some cases, a child's self-image is confused or inaccurate. Your interactions and the activities and experiences you provide can help the child reassess their feelings and perceptions about themselves. This also provides opportunities for the child to build on and extend their achievements – something all children should do.

Useful strategies to implement with children whose self-image is confused or inaccurate are described in the following table.

Discuss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Discuss things you know about the child that help disperse their insecurities. ▶ Discuss or introduce strategies that assist the child to become more skilled in the area of weakness; for example, a child who is disorganised may benefit from you giving hints on how to be more organised.
Demonstrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrate that the child's insecurities are false by showing them their past work and achievements.
Provide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide images or experiences that demonstrate that gender and culture do not determine likes and dislikes or personality. ▶ Provide attention and affection. ▶ Provide opportunities for the child to participate positively in the area they are concerned about.
Eliminate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Eliminate competitive games and activities as these boost the self-esteem of the winner at the expense of other participants, who have their failures and weaknesses highlighted.
Encourage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encourage the child to participate in similarity and difference activities so they can see how other children are all different, but share similarities. ▶ Encourage other people to visit the service to share their experiences, knowledge and interests, and expose the children to a variety of people.
Celebrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Celebrate areas of interest, strength and enjoyment.
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Place the child with other children who complement their skills. ▶ Place the child in a position where their skills and abilities are valuable.

Establishing high expectations

Demonstrate your belief in each child's capacity to succeed by having high expectations and believing in the potential of all children. This concept is reflected in EYLF/MTOP Principle 3: High expectations and equity.

If you stereotype children with additional support needs, you may create low expectations, which can lead to low aspirations and poor outcomes. Many children are conditioned into a certain way of learning and behaving based on what is expected of them.

Children's learning is enhanced when their educators and parents encourage them to have high expectations of themselves. This principle focuses on looking past a child's inability and instead concentrating on their capabilities and potential.

The following examples demonstrate how an educator may have either low or high expectations of a child with a visual impairment.

Low expectations	High expectations
<p>Oslo's parents overhear the educator telling the other children that Oslo is blind and that he can't see. The educator tells the children the things that Oslo can't do because he can't see properly. Oslo's parents feel that Oslo is being labelled negatively and is not receiving enough opportunities to succeed. They also feel that the children are being taught that vision is all that matters.</p>	<p>Oslo's parents overhear the educator telling the children that Oslo is visually impaired and cannot see well. The educator then tells the children that Oslo is clever at many things, including telling stories. The parents feel that Oslo is being valued and that his visual impairment is not the main focus.</p>

Catering for diversity

As an educator, you must support all children to participate as valued members of the group, regardless of their background, gender, age and ability. This respect for diversity aligns with EYLF/MTOP Principle 4: Respect for diversity. Representing each child involves more than simply adding a range of diverse activities and resources to the curriculum. Through your everyday practice, you can model respect and appreciation of the differences between people and the richness they bring to our lives. By talking to children and their families, you can gain insight into their culture and values. With incidental and intentional teaching, you can address unfairness and highlight interdependence, which helps children understand how to accept and live with each other.

To cater for diversity, you may also:

- ▶ encourage children to ask questions about differences they notice
- ▶ help children feel comfortable asking questions
- ▶ guide children to ask questions in positive ways
- ▶ avoid deliberately criticising or embarrassing children
- ▶ play games in which children need to match themselves with others
- ▶ add various dolls to the home corner
- ▶ display posters of different types of people involved in everyday activities.

Reflecting on workplace practice

As you strive to practise inclusion in your daily routine, remember to allow time for reflection and review. This links with EYLF/MTOP Principle 5: Ongoing learning and reflective practice. Ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ What worked well?
- ▶ What didn't work?
- ▶ What could I have done better?
- ▶ Were my expectations appropriate?
- ▶ What feedback have I received (from other educators, the children or their families)?
- ▶ How will this affect the way I incorporate inclusion, equity and diversity into future programming?
- ▶ What other equitable and effective ways could I use to give all children an equal opportunity to succeed?

Inclusive practices

Inclusive practices and programs provide children and adults with a diverse and responsive environment. Unfortunately, there are a number of barriers to effective inclusion. Because of this, services are forced to choose between mainstream, inclusive or full inclusion programs.

Inclusive practices should be promoted through every aspect of your service, impacting the environment, the children, their families and the rest of the community in a positive way.

The following table outlines how inclusive practices can be implemented.

Aspect of service	Inclusive practices
Inclusive environment	<p>An inclusive environment will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ change and adapt to the needs of the children at the time ▶ have different children doing different things with educators helping where needed ▶ be engaging ▶ be messy and busy, but not unsafe ▶ offer choices ▶ have activities for small groups, large groups and individuals ▶ encourage children to support and help each other ▶ have lots of time for interaction ▶ be child-centred ▶ have no issues of fairness, as children will understand that they have unique interests ▶ extend into the community; there are many benefits to an inclusive program.
Children with additional support needs	<p>Children with additional support needs should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ not be separated or segregated ▶ not be labelled ▶ be able to benefit through the modelling other children provide ▶ be able to participate with competent peers and learn new social and communication skills ▶ gain realistic life experiences that prepare them to live in the community ▶ have opportunities to develop friendships with typically developing peers.
Other children in the program	<p>Other children in the program should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ have opportunities to learn more realistic and accurate views about individuals with disabilities ▶ have opportunities to develop positive attitudes towards others who are different from themselves ▶ have opportunities to learn altruistic behaviours, and when and how to use such behaviours ▶ be provided with models of individuals who achieve despite challenges.

Aspect of service	Inclusive practices
Communities	Communities will conserve their resources by limiting the need for segregated, specialised programs.
Families of children with additional support needs	<p>The families of children who have additional support needs will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ be able to learn about typical development ▶ be less isolated from the remainder of their communities ▶ be able to develop relationships with families of other children who can provide them with meaningful support.
Families of other children in the program	<p>Families of other children in the program will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ develop relationships with families who have children with disabilities, and thereby make a contribution to them and their communities ▶ have opportunities to teach their children about individual differences and accepting individuals who are different.

Inclusive programs

In an ideal world, all services would be able to offer a fully inclusive program that:

- ▶ has shared values and visions
- ▶ is open to additional support needs
- ▶ provides support for parents
- ▶ provides high-quality programs with an individual child focus
- ▶ has funding for support services and resources
- ▶ communicates well with educators, staff, parents, families, children and communities
- ▶ has a team approach
- ▶ has inclusive goals and objectives
- ▶ provides training and professional development
- ▶ is family-focused.

Unfortunately, there are still a number of barriers to successful inclusion. These barriers impact the type of program that can be offered in a service.

Barriers to successful inclusion include:

- ▶ inadequate or insufficient access to information and resources
- ▶ lack of available places in education and care services
- ▶ insufficient support for educators; for example, insufficient time for planning
- ▶ limited training or lack of previous experience for educators, causing a lack of confidence in their ability to include a child with additional support needs
- ▶ limited access to resources and equipment necessary for a child with additional support needs.

Types of inclusion programs

There are three types of programs, each offering a different level of inclusion.

Type of program	Description	Example
Mainstreaming	Mainstreaming involves a child with additional support needs attending the regular care setting and following the regular program, but going outside the service to have any additional needs met.	Josh is visually impaired and his parents are deciding which service to send him to. One service believes in mainstreaming. Josh will attend the service and be able to participate in the activities that are provided for all children. Josh will then go to his specialist and seek support through the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC).
Inclusive	An inclusive program involves children with additional support needs attending the regular care setting, with support services or specialists coming into the service to provide a relevant program or any necessary assistance.	In an inclusive program, Josh will participate in the activities provided for all children, but the service will arrange for support services to come into the program and work with Josh on an individual level, providing a variation of the activities that are suited to his needs. Josh's needs will be met at times, but the service is not prepared to provide for Josh's specific needs themselves.
Full inclusion	Full inclusion involves a child with additional support needs attending the regular care setting and having the program adapted to their individual needs, with support from specialist services and/or specific specialists. Those who provide a fully inclusive program provide for the individual needs of all children and have the skills, resources and knowledge to do so. They use support services to provide for each child.	In a full inclusion program, Josh will participate in activities that are planned to meet his needs. All activities will be adapted as required to enable Josh to participate to his full potential and be involved with the other children. The educators will have lots of contact with Josh's specialists, and support services will come into the service and provide direction, ideas, resources and information to guide them in providing fully for Josh's needs.

The following beliefs are a feature of a fully inclusive program:

- ▶ Children with additional support needs are included as part of the program because they are part of the community and have the right to be involved, participate in everyday life, form friendships and be accepted. They are not in the program to be ‘fixed’ in the hope that they will become ‘normal’.
- ▶ Children of all abilities and backgrounds benefit from developing relationships and associating with children who are different from themselves. This diverse environment allows children to develop acceptance, understanding and friendship with a variety of children.
- ▶ A viable service has many participants, and all of their contributions are reflected in the program. Collaboration between parents, educators, specialists, support educators and others is valuable.
- ▶ Every child’s uniqueness and dignity must be valued. Their choices must be acknowledged and supported, and their fears and concerns responded to. Each child must have the opportunity to develop a sense of self.

Inclusive programming supports social interactions between all children. It provides developmentally appropriate activities and materials that are accessible to all children with adjustments made to ensure children can participate to their full ability. The objectives and outcomes are based on family input.

Practice task 1

1. Identify the areas in a service’s philosophy, policies and procedures that relate to inclusion, equity and diversity. List some of the practices in your service that support each of these ideals.

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2. Reflect on workplace practice. Write what your belief in each of the following areas is, and use an example to explain how you would implement this belief.
 - a. Assisting, supporting and encouraging children to participate

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b. Establishing high expectations in a child's ability to succeed

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c. Catering for diversity

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d. Providing inclusive practices and programs

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3. How do you ensure that all children achieve learning outcomes? What equitable and effective strategies do you use?

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4. Reflect on a service you are familiar with and identify if it provides a mainstream, inclusive or fully inclusive curriculum. Briefly explain your answer.

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1B Planning for inclusion and participation

Planning for inclusion and participation of all children can be a difficult task. This approach is based on two different sets of rights:

- ▶ every child's right to an opportunity to attend an education and care services environment
- ▶ every child's right to be represented equally within that environment.



Using reflective practice

According to EYLF/MTOP Principle 5: Ongoing learning and reflective practice, educators must use reflective practice as part of their ongoing learning. They can do this by examining what happens in the service and reflecting on what they can change.

Reflective practice involves evaluating workplace practice to gain new insights into how it represents equity and social justice. It requires you to examine one aspect of this practice and reflect, or look deeper, to try to develop new solutions and improved practices.

Reflective practice is the process of asking yourself questions. An inquiry process is about evaluating your work and putting new actions in place. As with any useful improvement process, your reflective practice will be cyclical, and may resemble the following diagram.



For more information on reflective practice, go to: <http://aspirelr.link/reflective-practice-education>

Providing opportunities to achieve

Reflective practice can also be used to identify more effective and equitable ways to ensure that all children have an opportunity to participate and achieve learning outcomes. It involves looking at what you provide to children and their families and how you provide it, and then identifying whether you can improve this.

Reflecting on child participation involves stepping back and reviewing the curriculum from a different point of view, such as that of a parent, director or educational leader. It may also involve asking others in your service for their opinion, or consulting external support services or people.

If you want your practices to be equitable and effective, you must be open to change and be prepared to develop and grow. You need to possess an attitude that views all children as capable and competent.

Developing professional knowledge

As well as reflecting on workplace practices, you must develop your own professional knowledge on the topic of inclusion.

There is a range of professional development opportunities to be found outside of your organisation, which allow you to learn about topics that are important to your current and future success.

The Inclusion Support Programme (ISP) provides each state and territory with an Inclusion Agency (IA) (total of seven agencies) that each employ a number of inclusion professionals. IAs assist eligible services to build their capacity and capability to provide and embed inclusive practice in their delivery of early learning and care programs. They support services to provide an inclusive environment for children with additional needs, including children:

- ▶ with a disability
- ▶ from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ▶ from refugee and Indigenous backgrounds.

Funding will also be available for early childhood and child care (ECCC) services to address a barrier to inclusion through the Inclusion Development Fund (IDF), such as subsidising the employment of an additional educator.

Bicultural support will be accessible through the IDF Innovative Solutions Support funding, and specialist equipment available through the IAs.

Services have access to the Inclusion Support Portal (IS Portal), which supports the delivery of the ISP.

For further information about the program, go to: <http://aspirelr.link/inclusion-support-programme>

Working in partnership

Working in partnership refers to educators collaborating with children, families, communities, and other services and agencies. Partnerships are a basic requirement for successful education and care provision. This is also highlighted in EYLF/MTOP Principle 2: Partnerships.

A partnership is formed when parties meet on an equal basis to work together. Working together enriches your information and resources, and your ability to apply and evaluate strategies. You need to take account of the fact that the child's parents are their most significant teachers. With the contribution of all parties, the child's learning outcomes are more likely to be achieved.

Families and early childhood educators do the following in genuine partnerships:

- ▶ Value each other's knowledge of each child.
- ▶ Value each other's contributions to and roles in each child's life.
- ▶ Trust each other.
- ▶ Communicate freely and respectfully with each other.
- ▶ Share insights and perspectives about each child.
- ▶ Engage in shared decision-making.

Concerns about the needs of a child may be discussed with:

- ▶ the child
- ▶ parents, families and community members (when culturally appropriate)
- ▶ field workers, resource workers, early intervention service staff and medical staff
- ▶ your service supervisor, coordinator or director
- ▶ school staff
- ▶ other care providers.

It is always better to consult too many people than not enough. Appropriate consultation leads to collaboration. Collaboration is the process of two or more people working together towards a common goal by sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus.

To ensure your collaboration is successful, you must implement skills that are common to all of your education and care relationships:

- ▶ Be non-judgmental.
- ▶ Be open to different perspectives.
- ▶ Demonstrate empathy.
- ▶ Demonstrate active listening.
- ▶ Check and confirm understanding.
- ▶ Follow organisational standards, philosophies, policies and procedures.

To ensure that you are supporting parents, and consulting and collaborating with as many people and services as possible, consider the following aspects.

Education

- ▶ Organise educational workshops.
- ▶ Develop a library of books and DVDs.
- ▶ Assign educators to help address particular needs.
- ▶ Link parents with community resources.
- ▶ Organise a resource system where families can access other resource centres in the community.
- ▶ Coordinate support groups.

Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encourage parents to attend meetings. ▶ Assign educators to help parents address concerns or complaints. ▶ Invite educator and parent groups to meet collaboratively. ▶ Help families advocate for and support each other.
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Revise philosophy, policies and procedures. ▶ Develop programs of activities. ▶ Plan orientation programs for new families. ▶ Develop parenting skills programs. ▶ Establish membership for meetings.
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Act as a source of information and referral about services available in the community for families. ▶ Use a variety of strategies to reach out to adults, families and children of all ages, races and socioeconomic backgrounds in the community. ▶ Encourage local civic and service groups to become involved in a variety of ways by mentoring, volunteering and helping with fundraising events.
Time and space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Be aware that people will have other commitments; for example, caring for children, mealtimes, sleep times, work and study. ▶ Be aware that people have both physical and environmental needs; for example, heating, cooling, comfortable seating and refreshments.

Making curriculum decisions

Including children’s cultural and social backgrounds in planning enables them to feel included in the service environment.

By focusing positively and openly on similarities and differences, diversity becomes an exciting experience. Through positive interactions, you can call attention to other points of view. You can encourage communication through small group activities and social situations, which encourage problem-solving and conflict resolution.

An environment that displays diversity may include resources from different cultures. Your program needs to provide limits for children and explanations of unacceptable behaviour. Remember to provide age-appropriate explanations and try to recognise why negative behaviour occurs between children. Be sensitive to the children’s views, but help them use their skills to prevent negative attitudes. Children are able to recognise differences between each other, but must also learn to show respect to themselves and others.

Role-modelling is an effective source of information that children use to learn desirable behaviour. Through modelling, adults can teach children and others a number of things, such as how to:

- ▶ empathise with others
- ▶ show affection
- ▶ help and share
- ▶ respect others’ opinions and needs
- ▶ follow cultural customs.

Watch this video about modelling positive behaviour and providing appropriate explanations.



Gathering additional resources

To meet the needs of families and children in exceptional circumstances or with additional support needs, you may need to gather extra resources or information to assist in developing and adapting the curriculum.

Additional resources may be needed in areas including:

- ▶ staffing levels
- ▶ skills of current educators
- ▶ transport vehicles
- ▶ access to the venue
- ▶ financial considerations of parents
- ▶ languages spoken by educators.

Resources may be acquired from a range of services, and your ISP can assist you to find these. You may also try services such as:

- ▶ support groups
- ▶ funding bodies
- ▶ local government agencies
- ▶ peak bodies
- ▶ charity organisations.

Adapting the service

Providing for the additional support needs of a child may require adapting the service. This may involve:

- ▶ gaining additional funding
- ▶ employing additional educators or resource workers
- ▶ changing routines
- ▶ purchasing or hiring special equipment
- ▶ training staff in relevant care practices
- ▶ making alterations to the venue
- ▶ using bicultural support workers
- ▶ using inclusion support facilitators
- ▶ providing linguistically appropriate information.

To enable a child or family to obtain fair access to your service, you may need some of the following resources.

Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Additional educators, specialists, support staff or services ▶ Parents ▶ Other significant people relevant to the child
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Meeting time ▶ Planning time ▶ Discussion time ▶ Relaxation or stress-relief time ▶ Set-up time ▶ Handover time ▶ Research time

Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Quiet areas ▶ Large or additional activity areas ▶ Clear areas ▶ Defined areas ▶ Storage areas
Materials and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Communication boards ▶ Reference books ▶ Internet ▶ Research tools ▶ Posters ▶ Chairs ▶ Ramps ▶ Wide doors
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Wages ▶ Equipment funding ▶ Purchasing additional materials and resources

Adapting daily activities

Most activities can be adapted so that all children can participate, but specially designed equipment is available to enable children with additional support needs to access activities.

The key to successful adaptation is your thinking. Instead of thinking, ‘This child can’t do that’, instead think: ‘How do we ensure that this child can participate?’

Parents, specialists and educators will have great ideas to help you. Here are some suggestions:

- ▶ A child in a wheelchair could play cricket if another child was running for them from base to base.
- ▶ Using communication symbols or hand actions to indicate different activity choices would enable a child with communication difficulties to tell you what they need or enable them to play a game.
- ▶ You could change the game rules so that all children could play using the same skills as the child with additional needs.

Adopting an ongoing approach

Addressing each child’s right to inclusion and participation means engaging with families and children to negotiate, develop and implement learning agendas, outcomes and assessment for the children. This consultation is ongoing, meaning it occurs at every stage of the educational process. It is continuous as review leads to identifying, implementing and then reviewing change.

An ongoing approach requires you to do the following:

- ▶ Share information about progress with all of those concerned.
- ▶ Identify and discuss issues of concern.
- ▶ Establish and maintain information exchange with parents or appropriate family/ community members about the child's needs and care strategies.
- ▶ Seek and gain parental permission prior to consulting with others regarding the child.
- ▶ Ensure communication occurs within a culturally and linguistically responsive framework.

Information may be gathered and shared with a range of people through:

- ▶ meetings
- ▶ communication books and/or journals
- ▶ evaluation forms or surveys
- ▶ questioning
- ▶ complaints
- ▶ reactions
- ▶ financial information.

Information you may wish to exchange with others to support children with additional needs includes:

- ▶ how the child feels about the program and the techniques used to present it
- ▶ what the child's level of participation is and how they participate with others
- ▶ whether equipment is being used appropriately
- ▶ whether equipment is adequate and in good condition
- ▶ whether additional specialist services, communication support or aids are required – you must gain parental permission to access services
- ▶ whether modifications are needed
- ▶ whether procedures for monitoring these points are in place and working.

Practice task 2

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Franka, a child of Aboriginal descent, commences at your service. You are told the following facts about Franka by her aunt:

- ▶ Franka has regular middle ear infections, which contribute to hearing problems.
- ▶ Chest and throat infections are common.
- ▶ In Franka's family, it is disrespectful for the child to make eye contact with an adult.
- ▶ Franka speaks an Aboriginal language, and limited English.
- ▶ Franka is only given water or milk to drink.
- ▶ Franka is not to eat potato, but should eat lots of other vegetables.

1. How would you demonstrate that you want to help Franka succeed and be included in your service? Summarise any information from your service philosophy, policies or procedures that supports your actions.

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2. Reflect on what you know, and list one area you may need to find out more about to support Franka. Explain how you will find this information.

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3. Choose one fact about Franka and explain how you could ensure this need is considered throughout the day.

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Summary

- ▶ In inclusive learning settings, the aim is to foster a sense of belonging and promote positive friendships and social relationships to support every child's learning to its full potential.
- ▶ Inclusion in a child's early years is part of their broader human rights. These rights are outlined in conventions and laws, and are the foundation of inclusion philosophies and policies.
- ▶ High expectations and equity is a principle of the EYLF/MTOP that values the potential of each child and their capacity to succeed.
- ▶ Catering for diversity includes respecting, appreciating and learning about the child's background.
- ▶ All children belong to a culture influenced by traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge, and also by the experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities. Including children's cultural and social backgrounds in programs enables children to be included and participate equally in the early childhood environment.
- ▶ Inclusion and equal participation involves consulting and collaborating with children, families, communities, and other services and agencies. This consultation is ongoing and occurs at every stage of the educational process.
- ▶ To meet the needs of families and children in exceptional circumstances or with additional support needs, you may need to gather additional resources or information to develop and adapt the curriculum.
- ▶ It is essential that you promote inclusion. To do so you must:
 - make curriculum decisions that promote participation
 - demonstrate actions that assist, support and encourage children to participate
 - interact with families and children in ways that show you believe in their capacity to succeed
 - work with others within and outside of your service to develop your professional knowledge of people with different needs.

Learning checkpoint 1

Promoting inclusion

Part A

Explain and provide evidence to show how each of the following people and services assist you to promote inclusion. You might provide evidence such as:

- ▶ documents
- ▶ pamphlets, leaflets or flyers
- ▶ website addresses
- ▶ notes from discussions
- ▶ points based on your knowledge.
 - a. Families of children with additional support needs

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- b. Educational leaders

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- c. Inclusion Agency (IA)

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- d. Services in the community that specialise in supporting children with specific additional support needs

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Part B

1. Reflect on UNICEF’s fact sheet, ‘The right to participation’ (<http://aspirelr.link/unicef-right-to-participate-pdf>) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Explain how your service philosophy, policies and procedures link to this international legislation. Discuss:
 - ▶ inclusion, equity and diversity
 - ▶ why you must understand different backgrounds, experiences, and needs of families in exceptional circumstances, or with additional needs.

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2. Link the principles of inclusion and participation to a principle, practice and outcome of the EYLF or MTOP. You can access these documents at a service or online at: <http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-approved-elf>

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Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Valuing and respecting differences

2B Providing opportunities to learn about diversity

Respecting diversity

Inclusion acknowledges the differences within community and family life. This diversity must be respected, understood and valued as part of the child's learning, so that they come to appreciate the richness it brings to the community.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
✓	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
✓	Learning environments
✓	Cultural competence
✓	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity
✓	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

2A Valuing and respecting differences

Respecting diversity means understanding that each individual is unique, and exploring these differences in a safe, positive and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance, to embrace and celebrate differences in each individual child.

As an early childhood educator, it is your role to embrace these differences. It is your challenge to provide an inclusive program that respects diversity and the differences that comprise the children and families in the service.



Valuing differences in the community

The EYLF/MTOP requires you to encourage and support children to acknowledge and value differences in the community. This is stated in the goals of both the frameworks: belonging, being and becoming.

EYLF/MTOP Principle 2: Partnerships, demonstrates the importance of developing relationships with families, communities, other educators and children to share their varied experiences, values and beliefs. This shared knowledge and skill occurs when you demonstrate 'Respect for diversity', another principle of the EYLF/MTOP.

Principle 5: Ongoing learning and reflective practice, encourages you to review the relationships you make and check that you value differences, and make the most of the differences in the community.

EYLF practices, including 'Holistic approaches', 'Cultural competence' and 'Continuity of learning and transitions', show you how to demonstrate your value for each child and their family and the way they:

- ▶ prefer to be educated and cared for
- ▶ learn from the differences in others.

Your ability to respond to these needs and expectations allows you to implement a culturally competent curriculum that values the participation of each person and supports children as they work toward and become competent in the framework outcomes.

This view is supported in EYLF/MTOP Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world. Through sub-outcomes, Outcome 2 states that:

- ▶ Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities, and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
- ▶ Children respond to diversity with respect.

Watch this video about helping children learn about differences between people in society.



The benefits of a positive attitude

An educator must have a positive attitude towards difference. The benefits include:

- ▶ developing self-acceptance and self-esteem
- ▶ becoming aware that there are differences and similarities
- ▶ broadening your understanding of the world
- ▶ belonging to many different communities
- ▶ developing respect for others
- ▶ developing a sense of fairness and cooperation
- ▶ acting in an inclusive manner.

Being a role model

New and different things spark children's curiosity, and their natural curiosity prompts them to ask questions and discuss the things that interest them. The way you communicate and the answers you provide affect children's attitudes, so be careful what you do and say. The best way to show respect for diversity is to model it through your words and behaviour. You can do this by:

- ▶ showing a positive attitude toward differences
- ▶ encouraging positive and unbiased views
- ▶ being open and answering all questions honestly
- ▶ avoiding feelings of embarrassment
- ▶ helping children feel comfortable asking questions by being comfortable yourself
- ▶ making sure your answers match the children's level of understanding.

Supporting children

As well as role-modelling, you can support children to respect diversity by:

- ▶ encouraging them to ask questions about the differences they notice
- ▶ guiding children to ask questions in a positive way
- ▶ challenging or restating expressions that communicate superiority or prejudice
- ▶ challenging stereotypes
- ▶ creating opportunities for children to develop an understanding of different experiences and perspectives.



Respecting the richness of society

Australia is a culturally rich society with a population drawn from all parts of the world. Australia's Indigenous people belong to the oldest continuous culture in the world. Each culture brings with it a different way of approaching daily life and viewing the world we live in. An appreciation and understanding of these different perspectives can enrich our lives and challenge our culturally embedded views.

Modelling respect for the cultural richness of society can be demonstrated by:

- ▶ having an interest in different cultural practices
- ▶ showing an equal interest in all cultures
- ▶ being willing to learn from members of a culture
- ▶ acknowledging that different cultural elements are a natural part of the learning environment.

Children can be taught to show respect by:

- ▶ being taught the meanings behind differences
- ▶ being taught about similarities and differences
- ▶ showing concern for others
- ▶ reflecting on their responses to diversity.

By experiencing this type of environment, children are challenged to explore, understand and acknowledge differences. EYLF/MTOP Outcome 1 states: Children have a strong sense of identity. This opens them up to some of the many different ways of being in the world, managing day-to-day life and living with others.

Respecting family differences

Families use education and care services for many reasons. As they enter the service, each child has their own interests, strengths and needs. Your service needs specific orientation processes to ensure parents, children and educators are prepared, and that these individual characteristics are identified and appropriate care can be arranged.

When the child of a new family requires additional support, your orientation procedure may alter slightly depending on the needs of the child. This may include time for you to arrange support structures, training or materials that are not already in your service.

If possible, identify whether a family needs support before entry to the service. Every family is different. Always acknowledge their concerns, values and feelings.

In many cases, the parent's feelings influence their values, goals and ideals for the child. Understanding these emotions, and developing an open and supportive relationship, enables you to create a more effective plan for their child.

Each family has its own pace of separation from their child based on the emotional needs of the family and the additional support needs of the child. Some will conclude the separation process in a few days. Others may need a few weeks to settle in. The age and stage of a child as well as the child's experiences, temperament, needs and abilities all affect this process. Respect these family differences and give each family the time it needs to settle their child into your service.

Additional support needs

Parents of a child with a disability or with additional support needs may be afraid that their child will be rejected or viewed as a problem. They may have already experienced this before.

Some common reactions in this type of situation include:

- ▶ emotional numbness
- ▶ grief
- ▶ questioning, e.g. 'Why me?'
- ▶ anger and frustration
- ▶ helplessness
- ▶ avoidance or denial
- ▶ rejection of the child
- ▶ rejection of information or advice
- ▶ desperation
- ▶ searching for answers.

Culture may also influence the family's acceptance and/or management of a child with an additional support need. Some cultural values include the family:

- ▶ believing that prayer is the key to their child's health
- ▶ carrying guilt, as they believe that they must have done something wrong to cause the disability or that they are being punished
- ▶ having unrealistic ideas about contamination or infection, even where an additional support need is not related to this
- ▶ accepting only alternative medicines and treatment (such as Chinese herbs, naturopathy or homeopathy)
- ▶ thinking that the child would be cured if they worked harder
- ▶ expecting that their child should be extremely intelligent
- ▶ accepting an additional support need in one gender, but not in another
- ▶ wanting to administer large doses of medication or multitudes of different medications.

Being culturally competent

The EYLF/MTOP also defines 'Cultural competence' as one of its practices. It clarifies that cultural competence is more than an awareness of cultural differences; it is the ability to understand, communicate and effectively interact with people across different cultures.

An educator who is culturally competent celebrates the benefits of diversity and provides a setting that highlights the importance of trust, respect, equity, fairness and social justice. Children learn to challenge and address injustice, racism, exclusion and inequality. Stereotyping is also challenged, and shown to be superficial and damaging through inclusive practice and by exploring and appreciating diversity.

Watch this video about developing cultural competence.



You may provide children with opportunities to develop their own cultural competence through:

- ▶ planning experiences and providing resources that broaden children’s perspectives, and encourage appreciation of diversity
- ▶ exploring the culture, heritage, backgrounds and traditions of each child within the context of their community
- ▶ developing an awareness of connections, similarities and differences between people
- ▶ practising inclusive ways of achieving coexistence
- ▶ exposing children to different languages and dialects, and encouraging appreciation of linguistic diversity
- ▶ encouraging children to listen to others and respect diverse perspectives
- ▶ discussing ideas about diversity with children.

Practice task 3

1. The following are five family differences related to capacity and ability that might be represented in your service. For each family, explain how this difference makes the child’s home life unique.

a. Single mum with four children

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b. Stay-at-home dad with two children

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c. A parent with a physical disability

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d. A child on the autism spectrum

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e. Two children living with their grandparents

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2. Describe one experience you could provide in your service that would help children celebrate the richness of society.

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3. Link the experience from question 2 to an EYLF/MTOP outcome.

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2B Providing opportunities to learn about diversity

The more exposure children have to diversity, the less they will see it as different. Children who engage with environments in which all people are valued and uniqueness is celebrated will view the world in a more open-minded way.

You have the opportunity to create this world for children. In reality, an environment with fewer differences needs more inclusive opportunities. When children are not faced with difference, they can feel threatened or uncomfortable when they do encounter it.



Upholding the rights of all children

It is the right of every child to have their culture, identity, abilities and strengths acknowledged and valued. These principles were set out by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and form the basis of the EYLF/MTOP.

If your curriculum is reflective of the approved learning frameworks, it must include and acknowledge diversity. This initially commences with the concept of ‘belonging’, in which the child feels:

- ▶ welcome and part of the service curriculum, decisions and plans
- ▶ accepted and important for being who they are.

This is not just about celebrating differences. It also includes the need for the child to feel respected and supported, and to know that they are safe and secure.

These needs are represented in the EYLF/MTOP principles, practices and outcomes. For example:

Principle	Practice	Outcomes
Respect for diversity	Cultural competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children have a strong sense of identity ▶ Children are connected with and should contribute to their world ▶ Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

These are some of the many aspects of the learning frameworks that suggest inclusion and rights should be foremost in the mind of educators at all times, and that children should be provided with opportunities to explore life in full, in as many ways as possible.

Learning about similarities and differences

Similarities and differences are evident in everyday life. How children deal with them shapes their perception of themselves and others, and their experience of the world. The best opportunities to help children develop positive attitudes to differences occur during daily interactions and events, such as those outlined in the following table.

Human show and tell	Small groups of children talk about special things in their home lives; for example, celebrations, where they live, what they do at home, who lives at their house and their favourite games.
Providing art materials in a range of skin tones	Paint, crayons, pencils and fabric can all be purchased or mixed to make shades that represent the various colours of children's skin. This might be an activity for one child to acknowledge their skin colour or a group activity where children talk together, compare skin tones and work with the colours.
Display table	Provide a small table where children can bring in special things from home. You might specify a topic (for instance, something you think no one else has seen before or something from another country) or leave it open for the children. Provide clear limits so that children respect others' property.
Photo puzzles	Photos can be cut into puzzle pieces.
Providing a medical aid in the home area	Add a medical item to a regular home corner; for example, crutches, a sling, a neck brace, a wheelchair or a walking stick.
Disability activities	Choose a disability or impairment and discuss what it means with the children (for instance, vision-impaired means that someone cannot see well or at all). Help children identify difficulties, but also look at alternative ways to do things and skills that are not affected by the impairment.
Language activities	<p>Games, songs and stories can be shared in languages from different cultures. Children in their early years learn new ways to communicate quickly, and enjoy being able to interact with others using different words and meanings.</p> <p>You can also introduce communication types, including COMPIC (symbols or pictographs that send messages) and Key Word Sign, which uses Auslan. Each word is matched with a hand sign. Auslan is the Australian Sign Language. Makaton is also a Key Word Sign, which uses signs and symbols to communicate.</p>
Treasure hunt	Have children hunt for natural items, such as stones, bark pieces and leaves. Talk about how these natural items are similar but different.
Explore new celebrations in small groups	Identify the purpose of the celebration and keep things simple. Children are interested in what they would need to do and whether they would wear different clothes or eat different foods.
Provide one cultural item	<p>Instead of creating an entire cultural theme, just provide one or two items in the regular dramatic play area; for example, a sari, turban, kimono, didgeridoo, pair of chopsticks or flag.</p> <p>Always research the background of the cultural item being added to ensure it is appropriate. You may ask a parent, search the internet or look in a book. Some people may be offended by your use of the cultural item. Others will welcome your inclusion. For example, some people may not feel the following are appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ didgeridoo: should only be played by males ▶ Vietnamese play money: usually used at funerals.

Example

Learning about similarities and differences

Louisa, an educator, notices that some children are using slang terms for a local ethnic group. After consulting with parents, Louisa devises a card game using photos of families and cards with their appropriate ethnic name. This is used as a matching game. The children check if they match the cards correctly, as the cards have matching patterns on the back.

Interdependence – learning to live together

In all settings, wellbeing generally depends on relationships with others. People are social beings and often rely on others to help meet basic needs; this is known as being interdependent.

Through inclusive practices, you can help children learn how to live together. Modelling respect and empathy, and caring for and encouraging children to cooperate and help others will instil values that support positive interactions. On a one-to-one level, you can also:

- ▶ show children that they are valued
- ▶ make children feel good about themselves to improve their self-esteem
- ▶ encourage children to care for others
- ▶ appreciate children’s efforts and teach them to appreciate others
- ▶ use respectful and positive communication
- ▶ teach social skills such as saying: ‘Good morning’, ‘Goodbye’ and ‘Thank you’
- ▶ set clear guidelines on what behaviour is expected.

Respecting different cultural practices

An environment of appreciation and understanding can be built by respecting the attitudes and practices of different cultures, some of which are described in the following table.

Personal space	Different people have norms for providing personal space when interacting socially. Some people believe you should create an arm’s length of space; others believe in physical contact while communicating.
Eye contact	People have differing views on eye contact. It may be a sign of honesty and respect to look a person in the eye when talking to them, or it may be a sign of disrespect in some cultures.
Tone of voice	Some people use loud and direct language for communication. It can sometimes give the illusion that a person is angry, but in fact it is how they usually speak. Other people may find this rude or obnoxious.
Nonverbal communication	Hand gestures are used regularly, such as shaking hands or giving a thumbs up. This may be polite to one person and offensive to another. The same goes for smiling or bowing your head.
Verbal communication and language	If you are aware of the communication style and language the family uses, you can respond appropriately and provide necessary support and resources.

Promoting respectful behaviour

In addition to positive reinforcement of respectful behaviour, which supports positive relationships and interdependence, you need to openly address statements and actions that promote superiority or prejudice. Strategies you may find useful are outlined in the following table.

Lay ground rules	Let children know it is unacceptable to use words or actions that hurt or exclude others. Invite the children to think about this and come up with ideas about how they make others feel good or bad, then use these ideas to set limits.
Challenge	Don't wait until a topic comes up. Initiate discussion or exploration at any time it is suitable.
Use mistakes as learning opportunities	Most of us have encountered racism, sexism and other biased attitudes. An environment that allows mistakes is one where children will learn. If children make a mistake, encourage them to apologise and help them understand the consequences of their actions.
Address non-inclusive actions	Be prepared for prejudiced behaviour or communication that promotes superiority. Identify topics that may arise and keep some books, puppets or other materials ready.
Share real experiences	Let children know about times when you felt excluded.
Encourage empowerment	It is not enough to support a child who has been excluded or has been made to feel uncomfortable about an aspect of themselves. Provide the child with the ability to share information, and feel confident and proud about their differences.

Example

Teaching children about interdependence

Sadia feels embarrassed among the other children as she is the only one with dark skin.

Wilma, an educator, notices that Sadia stands back from the other children. Sometimes a child asks Sadia why her skin is like that and an educator will come over and tell the children that it is not okay to ask questions like that.

Wilma decides to deal with the issue differently:

- ▶ She makes sure that different shades of skin are represented in posters and books in the room.
- ▶ She asks the children to bring in photos of their families to put up on the wall so they can see how different everyone else's family is.
- ▶ She develops a group time plan to use the family photos to show how the children have similarities that come from their parents.

In this way, Wilma incorporates discussion of Sadia's family and skin colour. She finds a simple book about melanin (which produces different skin tones) and uses this for discussion with the older children.

Upholding fairness

Outcome 2 of the EYLF/MTOP promotes fairness as an essential component of children's learning. Fairness involves considering whether others are included or excluded, and whether they are characterised and treated differently.

The issues of fairness that are relevant to children in early childhood include:

- ▶ lack of compassion and kindness
- ▶ rejection and exclusion of other people because they are different
- ▶ unwillingness to share (this is different to not sharing due to stage of development)
- ▶ selfishness
- ▶ dominating behaviour
- ▶ stereotyping attitudes
- ▶ rejection of other perspectives.

These issues can be dealt with as they arise through intentional teaching. Children can be invited to discuss a situation from the perspective of each child, and stories or puppetry can be used to engage the children without embarrassing the child concerned. Name the behaviour and discuss its effects without labelling the children in negative ways.

Respectful and equal relations

Each experience you provide children with should be embedded with behaviour that shows respectful and equal relationships. Spontaneous or planned discussion helps children see the links.

Through learning experiences and the support of attentive educators, children explore their own identities and those of others in a fun and non-threatening way. They share information and learn about each other. For instance, they might talk about family structures, what they do on the weekend, how they celebrate Christmas (or another celebration), what it might be like to live in another country or how you might do things if you have a disability.

Sometimes, you may need to alert children to notice a behaviour that shows disrespect. To do this you could discuss people's personal needs. You could even involve the children in activity groups where they think about how they would like to be treated, then share this information with others.

Practice task 4

Read the case study, then complete the tasks that follow.

Case study

Abena and Saili (both five years) are playing in the home corner. They are playing out a scene in which they have just come home from work and are getting ready for dinner. Simon, the educator, moves to the play area and asks Abena and Saili if he can play too. Abena pushes him out of the entrance of the home space, saying, 'You can't be in our family, you have the wrong colour skin!' She points to her dark-skinned arm.

1. Describe how you would respond to this situation. Consider the following:

- ▶ issues of fairness
- ▶ opportunities to learn about similarities and differences and how we can live together
- ▶ engaging children in discussions about respectful and equal relationships.

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2. Element 5.1.1 of the NQS states: ‘Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included’. This suggests that you must provide an environment that reflects the lives of children, their families and the local community. It also relates to how your service upholds children’s right to their culture, identity, ability and strengths within the curriculum.

Explain what an authorised officer would see in your service that demonstrates this element in practice. Consider:

- ▶ philosophy
- ▶ policies
- ▶ procedures
- ▶ workplace practices
- ▶ curriculum decisions.

You can access more information about the NQS expectations in the Guide to the National Quality Framework at: <http://aspirelr.link/nqf-guide>

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Summary

- ▶ Social, emotional, cultural and physical differences are part of diversity. These are the differences you will find in any group of people.
- ▶ By experiencing an inclusive environment, children will be challenged to explore, understand and acknowledge differences. This will open them up to the many different ways of being in the world, managing daily life and living with others.
- ▶ The aim of cultural competence is to build understanding between people, strengthen acceptance and connections within society, and work towards equality of opportunity.
- ▶ By developing respect for diversity, people develop their own sense of strength and confidence in their identity.
- ▶ Similarity and difference are part of everyday life. How children deal with them shapes their perception of themselves and others, and their experience of the world.
- ▶ You can help children learn how to live together through inclusive practices.
- ▶ Modelling respect and empathy, and caring for and encouraging children to cooperate and help others, will instil values that support positive interactions.
- ▶ The learning frameworks promote fairness as an essential component of children's learning. Fairness involves the consideration of others: whether they are included or excluded and whether they are characterised and treated differently.

Learning checkpoint 2

Respecting diversity

Part A

Interview two sets of parents from two different families. Explain that their participation will help you understand more about families, and the differences and similarities of children within the service. Remind the parents that their participation is voluntary and that they do not have to contribute any information they wish to keep private.

1. Ask the parents questions that focus on the differences in each family home. Consider family routines, culture, lifestyle and values. Provide a written copy of the questions that you asked and the families' responses.
2. Identify **four** similarities and **four** differences between each family.

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3. Choose one child from one of the families you have just interviewed. Explain how this child's rights could be valued and acknowledged within a service. Consider the following:
 - ▶ How the child's family culture has been valued and acknowledged
 - ▶ How the child's personal identity has been valued and acknowledged
 - ▶ How the child's abilities and strengths have been valued and acknowledged

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Part B

Develop a discussion experience for children that explores diversity. Include information about:

- ▶ fairness
- ▶ similarities and differences
- ▶ interdependence
- ▶ respectful and equal relationships.

Record your experience in a table similar to the following.

Experience plan:	
Group identification:	
Age of children:	
Information this discussion is based on:	
Why this information encouraged you to plan this experience:	
EYLF/MTOP Outcome:	
Name of discussion:	
Explanation of discussion. Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ questions asked ▶ other directions required ▶ how you incorporated fairness, similarities and differences, interdependence, and respectful and equal relations. 	

Materials required:	
Strategies used to get children involved:	
What will happen during the experience:	

Part C

The following communication types are sometimes used by children with additional support needs:

- ▶ COMPIC
- ▶ Key Word Sign – Auslan
- ▶ Key Word Sign – Makaton

For each communication type, answer the following questions:

1. What is it?

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2. Where can you access information about it?

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3. When might it be used within your service?

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4. What are **three** useful words you can learn to encourage the participation of a new child at your service?

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5. Develop a learning experience that will introduce one of these communication styles to a group of children. For instance, you might develop a game or activity that uses this communication style as part of:
- ▶ general play
 - ▶ a routine
 - ▶ a discussion about disability or communication.

Use a planning format similar to the following to describe the activity.

Communication style experience	
Group identification:	
Age of group:	
Name of experience:	
Value of the experience:	
Description of the experience:	
Materials required:	
Presentation of materials (describe, sketch or attach a photo):	
Strategies used to get children and educators involved:	
EYLF/MTOP Outcome:	
What will happen during the experience:	



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Investigating barriers to learning

3B Using information to inform actions

Identifying children with barriers to learning

The first step to providing an inclusive child-centred curriculum is developing an understanding of the barriers to a child's learning. This involves obtaining as much information as possible from a range of sources.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
✓	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
✓	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

3A Investigating barriers to learning

Barriers to learning are problems or situations that prevent children from accessing programs, make it difficult for children to join in play with others, or make it difficult to concentrate and learn.

It is every child’s right to be able to play and learn, and it is your responsibility to support them to do so. You have a duty of care to encourage all children to be part of the learning environment you provide, and this responsibility means that you need to be aware of possible barriers and work diligently to eliminate these.



Children’s rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child acknowledges the rights of all children to education. Article 29 states the following:

‘The education of the child shall be directed to:

- a. The development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- b. The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- c. The development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- d. The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origins;
- e. The development of respect for the natural environment.’

With these aims in mind, you have a responsibility to fully investigate the child’s barriers to learning.

Additional support needs

You may be caring for and educating children who have additional support needs, such as those outlined in the following table.

Additional support needs	Examples of diagnosis and/or causes
Language/ communication difficulties or impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Physical factors relating to mouth, nose and/or throat, muscle tone, structural problems, nerve or muscle control or hearing problems ▶ Syndromes or disabilities, such as autism, hearing impairment, intellectual delay or vision impairment ▶ Acquired brain injury ▶ Environmental factors such as lack of stimulation or neglect

Additional support needs	Examples of diagnosis and/or causes
Developmental delay or intellectual disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Illness experienced by the mother during pregnancy, such as rubella ▶ Hearing loss, either inherited or as a side effect of another illness ▶ Long-term illness and hospitalisation ▶ Birth injury or other injury ▶ Lack of oxygen during birth or as a result of an accident (such as near-drowning or suffocation) ▶ Problems with vision ▶ Being born prematurely ▶ Being exposed to drugs (such as alcohol) before birth ▶ Childhood illnesses that have lasting effects on development, such as meningitis ▶ Family stress, which means that a child does not receive consistent loving care in their first weeks and months ▶ Ongoing family stress (or child abuse) where a child is too anxious or distressed to learn ▶ Genetic or inherited condition, such as Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Williams syndrome and Angelman syndrome ▶ An injury to the brain or head
Physical disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Inherited condition, such as muscular dystrophy, spina bifida or cerebral palsy ▶ Acquired brain injury or spinal injury
Sensory disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hearing impairment, such as middle ear infection or damage, inherited hearing loss, premature birth, meningitis or viral infection during pregnancy ▶ Vision impairment, such as glaucoma, cataracts, albinism, optic nerve damage, macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa, nystagmus or usher syndrome ▶ Problems with other senses, such as taste, smell and touch
Behavioural and/or psychological disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Common disorders include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – conduct disorder (CD) – attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) – attention deficit disorder (ADD) – oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) – separation anxiety disorder – pervasive development disorder – depression – anxiety – phobias

Additional support needs	Examples of diagnosis and/or causes
Family circumstances and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Financial factors, such as low income or over-commitment, business failure, gambling addiction or job loss ▶ Social/emotional factors, such as lack of support, separation or divorce, abuse, violence, conflict or addiction ▶ Parent or sibling with health issues or a disability ▶ Education factors, such as lack of parenting skills ▶ Cultural conflicts
A child from a culture very different to the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Social/emotional factors, such as fear, confusion, lack of flexibility, difficulty managing change, anxiety, panic or insecurity ▶ Cognitive/language factors, such as lack of understanding, misunderstanding and feeling unsafe to explore ▶ Physical factors, such as using new materials/activities ▶ Moral factors, such as new or changed boundaries and limits
Abused child or child at risk of abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Abuse may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – physical abuse – emotional abuse – sexual abuse – neglect
Communication difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Trauma, violence and/or crises ▶ Disability (hearing, visual or speech) ▶ Health problems and disorders ▶ Learning problems ▶ Deprivation of sensory stimulation ▶ Children learning English as a second language ▶ Inability to understand social cues

Additional support needs may also extend to particular gifts or talents of the child, such as the following:

- ▶ verbal/language: reading, writing and speaking ability
- ▶ logical and mathematical: number, classification and problem-solving ability
- ▶ visual and performing arts: drawing, painting or musical ability
- ▶ body/movement/psychomotor: dance or athletic ability
- ▶ interpersonal: communication or leadership ability
- ▶ intrapersonal: reflective or self-sufficient ability.

Common barriers to learning

Barriers to learning are problems or situations that prevent children from accessing programs, and make it difficult for children to enter play situations or to concentrate and learn. They may be caused by an existing additional support need. However, there may be other issues involved, some of which are described in the following table.

Barrier to learning	Description	Example
Physical access	The building may be inaccessible, bathroom stalls too narrow for a wheelchair and doors too heavy	Craig uses a wheelchair and he cannot enter and exit the building during the play session. This means he cannot participate in indoor/ outdoor play.
Economic factors	Limited funds for adapting facilities	The service Craig attends has limited funds and cannot afford to widen doorways for his wheelchair.
Social attitudes	Social perceptions towards those who have additional support needs, including negative personal attitudes and values of educators	Craig's educator does not allow him to participate in any group times as he is unable to sit on the floor in the same way as other children.
Organisational procedures and practices	Lacking flexibility in relation to timing and priorities	Breakfast is served prior to 8.00 am. Craig undergoes medical treatment each morning and, on one occasion, he does not arrive until 8.15 am. The service refuses to provide him any breakfast.
Existing client service strategies	Being inflexible in relation to meeting the needs of stakeholders	Craig's mum rings, saying she needs to speak to the director as soon as possible. The educator who takes the call does not relay the message.
Educational environment	Inadequate materials or an unresponsive curriculum	Craig demonstrates that he is ready to learn to wash his hands under the tap in the bathroom. Although this could be implemented immediately, the educator planning the curriculum states that this cannot commence until Craig is a focus child. This won't be for another two weeks.
Educator skills	Inexperienced educators who do not know how to interact with children who have additional support needs	Craig's educator knows that Craig has difficulty holding small items. When it comes to games and experiences that involve small items, rather than adapting the game so he is included, she immediately tells Craig it is too hard for him to participate and sends him to alternative activities.

Barrier to learning	Description	Example
Support systems	Parents and educators who feel overwhelmed and do not know where to go for help	<p>Craig has a range of specialists that support his development and learning. Craig’s educator, however, has no support or advice apart from reports from these people.</p> <p>The educator should contact the professional support coordinator (Inclusion Agency (IA)), but doesn’t bother, meaning that she misses out on important information (and maybe even funding) that may support Craig’s needs.</p>
Communication supports and/or requirements	Lack of interpreter/translator support, particularly when exchanging important information	<p>Craig’s mum speaks Italian as a first language and is unable to understand long or detailed discussions in English.</p> <p>The service does not access an interpreter and is not respecting the knowledge and skill Craig’s mum has in relation to his needs or her role as a parent.</p>
Socialisation and community involvement	Staging for the community by setting the service up in a way that has a pleasing façade, but is flawed in practice	<p>The service is due to have an assessment review for the NQF. It organises for Craig to be in the service on the day of the assessment. Prior to the day, the service ensures the building is fully accessible to Craig, includes him in the program and accesses an interpreter. The educators know that if the service is recognised as meeting Craig’s needs, its profile in the community will be raised.</p>

Identifying children with barriers

Identify barriers to learning as early as possible, so that the child and their family feel welcome. If you demonstrate an inclusive approach and show willingness to accommodate the child and the family’s needs, you will establish a positive working relationship that you can build on.

Using all resources

When trying to identify the barriers to a child’s learning, you must use all the resources at your disposal. Begin the process by being aware of the resources in the organisation. This will help you to assess whether adaptations need to be made.

Make sure you talk to the parents and the child. They are a resource of valuable insight and information. Remember that parents have experience in dealing with their child’s needs and abilities.

Being proactive

Do not wait for the child to say there is a problem; you must be proactive. Signs that a child may be facing a barrier are often demonstrated in their behaviour. For example:

- ▶ Are they avoiding certain people or situations?
- ▶ Is there a lack of participation or interest, or is the child experiencing anger or frustration? This may be due to physical restrictions in the built environment, or in the equipment and activities provided.
- ▶ Are they withdrawing or reluctant to join in?
- ▶ Is there a lack of progress in learning tasks?

Being relevant

When responding to an identified barrier, keep in mind that it is your responsibility to plan a program that provides relevant:

- ▶ modified equipment and activities
- ▶ precautions
- ▶ activity selection
- ▶ additional support
- ▶ specialist resources
- ▶ unbiased responses.

Collecting observational data

To identify any barriers to learning, you must observe the child in a range of situations. The information allows you to:

- ▶ clarify any concerns
- ▶ gain a greater understanding of the situation by viewing it from the child's perspective
- ▶ gather information from others
- ▶ gain insight by investigating the child's behaviour – their level and type of interaction with adults and other children, their emotions, any anxieties and/or aggression that they express at the time.

As far as possible, your observations should be objective; that is, not judgmental or critical of the child's behaviour or abilities. Observations should be recorded as descriptions, free of interpretation and opinion.

There should be many common observation methods available in your service. Talk to your supervisor or another person requesting your observation information, and choose the right method/s for the task.

The following outlines different methods for collecting observational data.

Secondary sources

A secondary source provides information you have not observed yourself. Orientation provides a great opportunity to collect documentation about children and their families. It is also a time for developing open verbal communication.

However, the discussions you have with parents on a daily basis are where most of your important information will come from, as you ask questions and listen to the details that only parents can share.

Your co-workers and specialists can also provide useful information. Two other secondary sources are:

- ▶ Enrolment records: forms completed by the child's parent/s that contain information such as the child's name, address, age, developmental aspects, interests, likes, dislikes, routine, language, family, religion, culture and cultural practices, social interactions and reactions to the play environment.
- ▶ Specialist reports: records that contain developmental or behavioural information and strategies for management and support.

Records of questioning

Questioning is useful, particularly when working with older children. You can question children directly, or develop a questioning method that allows children to consider and reply in their own time.

Not all questioning is useful. Sometimes children respond inappropriately, or say what they think you would like to hear, rather than the information you actually seek.

A daily evaluation sheet is an example of a questioning method (as is a survey, questionnaire or form). A daily evaluation sheet asks specific questions about how the day went, such as:

- ▶ what activities were enjoyed most
- ▶ what could be extended
- ▶ how the curriculum can be improved.

Not all children can contribute to this type of recording themselves. However, they can all help you decide what to record if you ask open questions or use prompts.

Graffiti sheets (posters or record books) can also be used to ask a question and have various people add their ideas.

Verbal questioning can be recorded in a variety of ways; for example, you may use a jotting or anecdotal record, or a checklist to tick off or make notes against an anticipated set of responses.

Children may enjoy writing or drawing into an 'all about me' page. These pages contain spaces for the child to complete, guided by questions such as:

- ▶ What am I really good at?
- ▶ What are my favourite games?
- ▶ What are my favourite toys?
- ▶ What do I like doing?

<p>Diaries, journals, logs and communication books</p>	<p>Diaries, journals, logs and communication books are commonly used as forms of communication between the family and the educator. These records may have a specific focus (such as recording interactions), but they are usually used to record general information. Sometimes this method is used to create a 'story of the day', something parents look forward to when they pick up their child.</p>
<p>Brainstorming webs</p>	<p>Webs are an excellent tool for recording brainstorming sessions or mapping what you know about a child. The structure of a web allows you to identify links and clearly map out aspects you are focusing on. By using a web with the central topic of interest, you can tease out the contents and identify what you and the children already know, and what you and the children would like to know. This is a great way to commence a project, as it allows everyone involved to think about the topic and consider it fully.</p> <p>Webs may also be used to document your entire curriculum or plan. They can document a range of information about a particular child or group. Again, the web allows you to link information, and it can be as simple or complex as you feel is suited to your needs. You may record a child's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ development ▶ interests ▶ links with others ▶ emerging skills ▶ strengths.
<p>Learning stories</p>	<p>Learning stories use narrative as a recording method. The narrative should be as engaging as possible. It may include a simple story relating to one incident, or follow through days and/or weeks of a project, activity, development or investigation. A learning story can be added to by the child, parents and others who participate in the child's life.</p> <p>The EYLF/MTOP encourages educators to view children, the curriculum and pedagogy in a creative and open manner. Learning stories fit this brief, as they focus on the child's interests and skills, and on the stories or journeys of their learning experiences.</p> <p>Each learning story demonstrates that you are able to do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notice: observe children's learning. 2. Recognise: strive to understand what you notice. 3. Respond: put your understanding to use by acting to provide for the child. These three principles are necessary if you are to produce valuable records. <p>Learning stories lead you to identify objectives (also called 'What's next', 'Follow up' or 'Future planning'). Objectives are essential as they help you plan sequentially and ensure your plans for each child demonstrate your high expectations, yet are realistic and within their abilities.</p> <p>As you become more skilled at writing learning stories, you will start to develop more expressive comments in your recordings.</p>

<p>Information and communication technology</p>	<p>One of the most effective methods for capturing observations that can be shared is by using information and communication technology (ICT), which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ computers and laptops ▶ digital photo albums or frames ▶ smartphones ▶ digital cameras. <p>Children, parents and educators can easily become involved when an ICT medium is used. Photos can be displayed and video recordings can be played at any time that is suitable. Photos can also be combined with written narratives to capture a learning event. This combination often provides the most valuable record. Learning stories are sometimes developed using these techniques.</p>
<p>Sociograms</p>	<p>A sociogram is a useful and simple tool that uses a web-like connection to map out who a child interacts with and who interacts with the child. By including all of the children involved in your observation, you can use arrows and lines to demonstrate who interacted with whom.</p> <p>A sociogram can concentrate on one child or the interactions that occur within a group. You can use a sociogram to record emerging communication skills, new relationships or changing dynamics in a group.</p>
<p>Jottings and anecdotal information</p>	<p>Jottings are brief notes taken throughout the day that tell you something important. They may be on a post-it note or scrap of paper. These can be used later to complete other records when you have more time.</p> <p>An anecdote is a simple point of interest about development, skills or interests, and is written as a brief description. An anecdotal record can be written from memory; you may see something you wish to record, then later create an anecdotal record.</p> <p>Anecdotal records do not record every detail of the environment or observed behaviour – the focus is just on the point of interest you observe.</p> <p>Anecdotal records can also be used to describe what is happening in photos that may form part of your documentation.</p>
<p>Time and event samples</p>	<p>Time samples record observations taken at specified times. It may be every five minutes, every half an hour, or at a set time each day. A time sample is useful for recording patterns in behaviour or interactions.</p> <p>Event samples record your observations each time a particular event occurs. You specify what event is important to record, then, each time the event occurs you add a record of what happened before, during and after the situation. In this type of sample, you are able to consider everything that happens during the event, which allows you to provide an unbiased account.</p> <p>An event sample is an excellent tool for recording behaviour. It can be used to record information relating to one child or a number of children, and can be based on one event or a range of events.</p>

<p>Running records</p>	<p>Running records require some preparation because you need to make sure you are available for a required amount of time (usually between one and 10 minutes). The length of time you observe the child for is based on what you want to record.</p> <p>The purpose of a running record is to record everything you see the child do and say during the specified amount of time. A running record also needs to contain information about the spaces the child plays in and all details of your observation in each domain or area of development.</p> <p>This type of record is very demanding of your time as you need to continually observe and record information. It also demands a good knowledge of child development, as you must watch every action the child makes.</p> <p>A running record is always recorded in the present tense.</p>
<p>Samples of children's work</p>	<p>By collecting children's drawings, paintings, stories and other work, you can build a clear record of progression or sequence in development or interest. You can either collect originals or photocopies to keep on file – ask the child before you take samples of their work.</p>

Listening to the child

Include the child's perceptions and insights into their situation. Your goal is to work with the child to construct learning that is relevant and meaningful to them, not to impose it on them. Children have a unique insight into their situation and needs, and are often able to express their learning goals.

It is often presumed that very young children are incapable of contributing to a discussion regarding their education and learning. However, they have valid opinions that can inform educators. For instance, children can complete simple questionnaires and respond to questions about the areas of learning they are involved in. Such information can then be used in planning, and should be included in the reports you compile. If children are capable of contributing to the process of observation and/or assessment, their views should be valued and respected.

Using data to gain understanding

Once you have collected data and information about the child, it can be used to clearly identify and establish the areas of concern. This is usually done in a tabulated report (see the example below).

Your service may have its own way of reporting this information. Always follow the prescribed procedures and practices of your workplace. If in doubt, ask your supervisor.

Example

Report of barriers, observations and concerns

Barrier	Observation	Concern/action
Social attitudes of educators	▶ No evidence of stereotyping or bias	Not applicable
Physical access	▶ Steps at back door ▶ No hand rails	Problem with access to outdoor play area
Economic factors	▶ Funding available for modifications to building	Could apply for this funding
Organisational procedures and practices	▶ No provision for children with limited mobility	Needs to be addressed to ensure barriers are taken into consideration and addressed in policy, processes and practices
Existing client service strategies	▶ No evidence of administrative barriers	Not applicable
Educational environment	▶ Child able to access and use learning resources	Not applicable
Educator skills	▶ Child needs assistance with personal care	Educator training and responsibility
Support systems	▶ Parent in need of support, reporting burnout	Need to identify community support for family
Communication support and/or requirements	▶ Child has good verbal skills ▶ Parents willing to work with educator in planning for support and inclusion	Not applicable

Practice task 5

1. Use a checklist similar to the following to observe any barriers in your service.

Possible barrier	How to reduce the barrier to learning
Social attitudes of educators	
Physical access	
Economic factors	
Organisational procedures and practices	
Existing client service strategies	
Educational environment	
Educator skills	
Support systems	
Communication supports and/or requirements	

2. For each of the following additional support needs, identify a barrier in your service that may affect the child’s inclusion:

a. Child with behavioural or psychological disorders

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b. Child at risk of harm or illness

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c. Child with difficult family circumstances

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3B Using information to inform actions

Information gathered about a child is confidential, and you need to obtain the parent's permission before sharing it with others. You need to be clear about what information is to be shared, who it is to be shared with and for what purpose. The same applies to obtaining information about the child from other support services or professionals. Approaches to others should only be made with the parents' knowledge and permission.



Discussing your concerns with others

Confidentiality and privacy are some of the most important issues you face when considering the legal and ethical aspects of your role. The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) protects all personal information handled by businesses, including education and care services.

Any information about the children and their family members must be kept private and only shared with the appropriate people when necessary. If you need to discuss something about a child with another educator, do it in private where other children and parents can't hear.

Your role in regard to privacy is to:

- ▶ understand what is required of you
- ▶ read and implement procedures that link to privacy and confidentiality
- ▶ ensure you follow the policies and procedures relating to confidentiality
- ▶ ask about changes that may be made to confidentiality procedures (staff meetings are a good time for this)
- ▶ use the privacy principles to determine your actions.

People you may consider

The input of others involved in the child's care can provide a more complete picture of the child's situation and needs. People to consider include:

- ▶ the child, their parents and other family or community members
- ▶ referral agencies
- ▶ field workers, resource workers and early intervention service staff
- ▶ medical staff and specialists, such as paediatricians, cardiologists, psychiatrists, dermatologists, speech therapists, allergists, nutritionists and physiotherapists
- ▶ your service supervisor, coordinator or director
- ▶ school or integration aides and teachers
- ▶ other care providers.

Be sure that these consultations are respectful, relevant and purposeful.

Developing a holistic understanding

When observational data is combined with information or reports from the child’s parents and others working with the child, a holistic picture emerges.

A holistic picture is a combination of data gathered about the child that relates to different aspects of their lives. The aim is to gain an insight into the child’s circumstances and needs. This holistic understanding is created from multiple sources; for example:

- ▶ observing the child interacting with others in the organisation
- ▶ using the facilities and resources in the service
- ▶ talking with and observing the child and parent, both individually and together
- ▶ consulting with others who have an input in the child’s care.

This profile of the child is not static. It must be reviewed regularly to ensure it contains the most current and relevant information about the child, on the following topics.

Health status	Personal characteristics	Needs and abilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The impact of medication and pharmaceuticals ▶ Chronological and/or physiological age ▶ Disability ▶ Orthopaedics ▶ Incontinence ▶ Psychosocial issues ▶ Cardio-respiratory conditions ▶ Medications ▶ Neurological conditions ▶ Musculoskeletal conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cultural and linguistic diversity ▶ Rural or remote location ▶ Income ▶ Gender ▶ Sexuality ▶ Age ▶ Family systems, needs and circumstances ▶ Religion ▶ Length of time in Australia ▶ Whether they are at risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Any disability, including physical, sensory, intellectual, language or psychiatric ▶ Socialisation ▶ Communication ▶ Behavioural or psychological disabilities

Once you have gathered a range of useful evidence, analyse the information and clearly identify what changes are needed to accommodate the needs of the child. You can then begin to develop an individualised plan for inclusion and support.

Practice task 6

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Molly is two years old and is about to commence her orientation process at a service. Molly is hearing-impaired. She has no language skills and does not respond to sounds; however, she does know some Auslan communication. Molly’s mother is a confident parent who is positive about Molly’s entry into the service.

1. How would you go about developing a holistic understanding of Molly's particular needs? Consider:
 - ▶ who you might discuss Molly's needs with
 - ▶ how you might collect data about Molly
 - ▶ how you might use the data to inform your actions.

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2. Who would you contact to gain more information about Molly?

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3. How might service policies and procedures apply to this situation?

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Summary

- ▶ Barriers to learning are problems or situations that prevent children from accessing programs and make it difficult for children to play, concentrate and learn.
- ▶ You can identify barriers to learning by being aware of the resources in the organisation and what information or resources you need to access externally.
- ▶ To identify any barriers to learning, it is essential to observe the child in a range of situations.
- ▶ It is important to include the child's perceptions and insights into their situation.
- ▶ The input of others involved in the child's care provides a more complete picture of the child's situation and needs.
- ▶ Once you have combined your observations with other information you have gathered, you should be able to clearly set out the areas of concern.
- ▶ When you have gathered useful evidence, analyse the information and identify what changes are required to meet the needs of the child.

3. What actions would you take to develop a holistic understanding of the child's needs? Discuss the following:

- ▶ The additional needs of children with autism
- ▶ Who you might consult to gather information about these needs
- ▶ How you might investigate and trial strategies to address these needs
- ▶ How you might encourage participation by reviewing or suggesting adaptations to service delivery to meet these needs

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Part B

Choose one of the following children with additional support needs and answer the questions that follow:

- ▶ a child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- ▶ a child who has been neglected
- ▶ a child whose parents have recently divorced
- ▶ a child with diabetes
- ▶ a child with a slight vision impairment.

1. What barriers to learning might this child have?

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2. Identify the following in relation to the child:

- a. A resource commonly found in a service that could be used to support the child and their family

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- b. An adaptation to normal service delivery that could easily be implemented to support the child and the family

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- c. **Two** things you may need to know or do before orientation

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- d. Any procedures or work practices that may be relevant

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Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

4A Developing an inclusion plan

4B Adapting and reflecting on the plan

Developing a plan for support and inclusion

To ensure all additional support needs are met, it is wise to develop a plan for support and inclusion. This allows you to plan the way forward and take into account all aspects of the child's and family's needs. Catering for these within the plan makes it more effective and reduces the likelihood of unexpected issues occurring.

The additional support needs of some children are profound, meaning that without a plan of inclusion, they can be disadvantaged.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
✓	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
✓	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
✓	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

4A Developing an inclusion plan

Inclusion plans are a useful way to document the strategies that will be used to guide the process of inclusion. This is especially useful if the plan is implemented before the child commences care.

Inclusion plans also provide a framework to collect information about the child, and for consultation and review. This enables you to develop a communicative and trusting relationship with families and others involved in the child’s care.



Making curriculum decisions

To develop an appropriate inclusion plan, you must be clear about the child’s needs. These must be considered alongside the family’s values, needs and requirements. When making curriculum decisions for each child, you must also consider the child’s abilities, goals, interests, expectations and health status.

Policy and cultural norms are also important. When developing an inclusion plan, consider the elements in the following table.

Elements	Description
Philosophy, policies and procedures of your service	<p>These must meet legislative and inclusion requirements. Some of the policies and procedures of your service will include strategies for inclusion and developing inclusion plans.</p> <p>Other things you will find in the service philosophy, policies and procedures are values and beliefs about confidentiality and consultation involving specialists and referral processes. These should all link with legislation.</p>
Cultural norms and processes for responding to children’s needs	<p>Background information of the family gathered through discussion or other information-collection methods can contribute enormously to how you approach inclusion and involve the family in any process for programming and support.</p>

Example

Adopting an inclusion plan

Lynne, an educator, is aware that Maxwell has recently arrived in Australia from Iran. At orientation, the educator and Maxwell’s parents feel an inclusion plan would be useful to ensure Maxwell settles into care. They think that developing an inclusion plan immediately will help them to avoid issues later on.

Catering for children in exceptional circumstances or with additional needs

Children's needs should be carefully and respectfully catered for in consultation with the child's family and any others involved in the child's care. This should be approached as a process as it will take time to make contacts, establish rapport and gather information.

Different approaches are needed for communicating with different people. Be sensitive to each person's culture, whether it is an ethnic, service or family culture. Some families or family members may have special needs and these must be taken into consideration.

Planning for support and inclusion

A plan for support and inclusion clearly sets out what you know, what resources you have available, what you want to achieve and how you intend to achieve it. Once these are documented, you can use them as a guide for practice and review.

The key elements to consider when developing an inclusion plan are described in the following table.

Key element	Description
The child's details	▶ Name and date of birth
Those involved in developing the plan	▶ Educator ▶ Family ▶ Staff ▶ Other people involved in the child's care
Needs to be addressed	▶ Needs identified through observation and consultation
Relevant background information	▶ Cultural and medical history ▶ Case workers' reports
Things the child does well	▶ Observed and gathered through consultation
Long-term goal	▶ What your long-term expectations are
What you will work on now (objectives)	▶ Current expectations
How you will achieve the objectives (strategies) and inclusion practices	▶ Minimising barriers in the program and environment
Resources and materials needed	▶ Support staff and appropriate materials
How the child can be involved and supported	▶ Consultation and collaboration

Key element	Description
How the family can be involved and supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultation and collaboration ▶ Identify family needs and assist in finding suitable support and resources
EYLF/MTOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Connecting the EYLF/MTOP principles, practices and outcomes as appropriate

There is no standard format for an inclusion plan. Each plan will change according to the needs of the child and the service. The following are two different examples of how to organise the elements in the plan.

Example	Inclusion plans			
	Inclusion plan 1			
	Child details	Those involved in developing the plan	Needs to be addressed	Relevant background information
	Child's name: Age: Date plan commenced: Date of review: Date plan achieved:			
	Things the child does well	Long-term goal	Objectives – what to work on now	Strategies – how to achieve the objectives
	Things needed	Involving and supporting the child	Involving and supporting the parent	Changes to make in the environment and program
	EYLF/MTOP outcomes:			

Example

Inclusion plan 2

Name of child:

Date of birth:

Date of plan:

Date to be reviewed:

Those involved in developing the plan:

Details of the child's needs:

What you know about the background:

Things the child does well:

Goals:

Objectives:

EYLF/MTOP outcomes:

Resources and materials needed:

Strategies for achieving the objectives in relation to the environment:

Strategies for achieving the objectives in relation to the program:

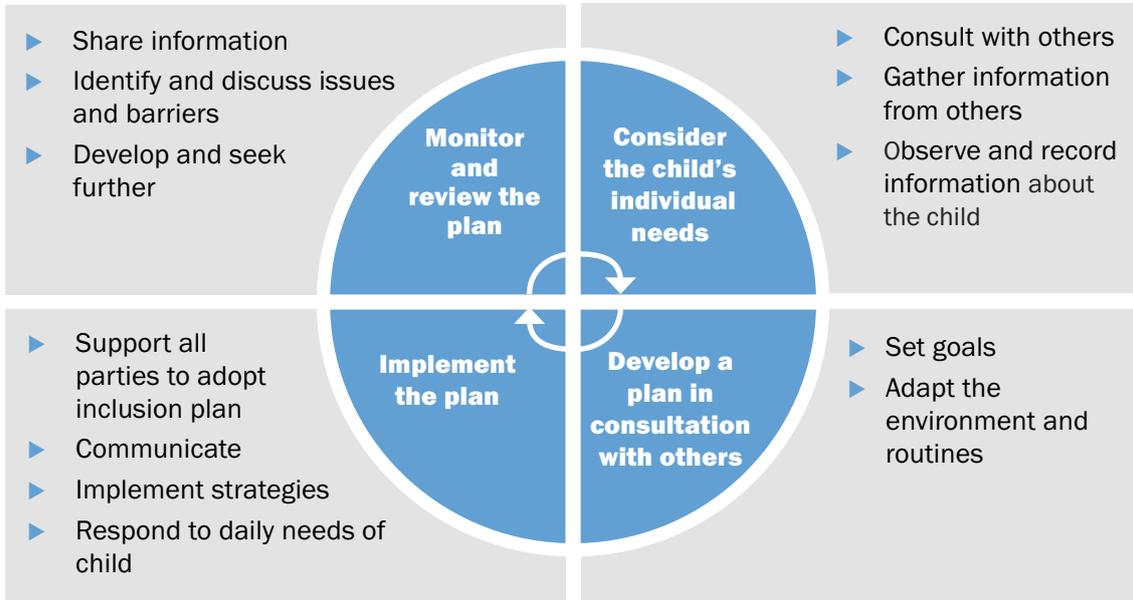
How the child can be involved or supported:

How the parents can be involved and supported:

Development process

The process for developing this type of plan involves gathering information from a range of different sources through interviews, consultations, records and observations. All the information must be collated and organised so that it can be presented to others for consultation.

The development cycle of an inclusion plan may look similar to this.



Organisational policy and procedures need to be taken into account when developing a plan. If there are currently no policies or procedures, they must be developed.

An independent inclusion policy is not mandated; however, Element 6.2.2 of the NQS states: 'Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program'. This suggests that your service must demonstrate its commitment to full inclusion throughout its philosophy, policies and procedures.

Consultation process

When developing a plan for inclusion, it is valuable to consult a variety of people and services. To gain appropriate support, seek advice, interpret the child's behaviour and make decisions about your plan of action, it is essential that you include others involved with the child, such as:

- ▶ the child and their parents
- ▶ other family members and community members (where culturally appropriate)
- ▶ educators and other staff
- ▶ professionals involved in the child's or family's care
- ▶ referral agencies
- ▶ support groups.

Consultation with parents and the child is an essential part of developing an inclusion plan. This may involve an informal discussion, or consist of meetings and in-depth discussions with a range of people if the needs are more complex. The child's parents may be able to provide you with options for response, strategies you may not have considered or insights into things that happen outside of the service.

Other people, such as staff members, others caring for the child, and resource and referral bodies must also be included and consulted as applicable. In addition, all educators working with the child need to be consulted so they too can implement any developed plans.

Watch this video about discussing information with families.



Consultation strategies

To ensure you are consulting and collaborating with as many relevant people and services as possible, consider the strategies outlined in the following table.

Consideration	Strategies
Education on relevant topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organise education workshops. ▶ Develop a library of books and DVDs. ▶ Assign staff members to help address particular needs. ▶ Link parents with community resources. ▶ Organise a resource system where families can access other resource centres in the community. ▶ Coordinate support groups.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encourage parents to attend meetings. ▶ Assign educators to help parents address concerns or complaints. ▶ Invite educator and parent groups to collaborate. ▶ Help families advocate for and support each other. ▶ Involve parents in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – revising philosophy, policy and procedures – developing programs of activities – planning orientation programs for new families – developing parenting skills programs – establishing membership for meetings.
Community outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Act as a source of information and referral about services available in the community for families. ▶ Use a variety of strategies to reach out to adults, families, and children of all ages, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds in the community. ▶ Encourage local civic and service groups to become involved in a variety of ways by mentoring, volunteering and helping with fundraising events.
Time and space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organise childcare so parents can attend. ▶ Use areas that are accessible, safe and comfortable. ▶ Stick to projected time lines. ▶ Be timely in your responses.

Identifying and setting goals and objectives

Before you set any goals, consider:

- ▶ the child's needs
- ▶ the influence of the environment
- ▶ the positive and negative aspects of the current program
- ▶ strategies that have been successful and unsuccessful
- ▶ new or altered strategies you may wish to try
- ▶ your service philosophy, policies and procedures
- ▶ cultural norms and current processes for responding to behaviour
- ▶ resources.

By considering all factors, you can help parents identify the direction they think is best. This will also help you to proceed to guide inclusion successfully.

Develop goals and expectations based on your understanding of child development and the context of your service. Parents should participate in this goal-setting and be part of the planning process by sharing information about their lifestyle and their wishes for the child. Do not simply expect families to come up with goals and objectives – work with them to identify possibilities and transform their thoughts into measurable aims.

Watch this video about expectations of different cultures and families.



Setting goals

Goals can be long-term and must be established to be consistent with the abilities, age and developmental stage of the child. They can be broken into short-term objectives that are easily achievable. Goals will be based on:

- ▶ the results of your consultations and observations
- ▶ the outcomes you and others wish to achieve
- ▶ realistic expectations.



If you have gathered all the information you can about a child and considered all directions and solutions, but still lack confidence in your ability to resolve a situation, gain support from an experienced colleague.

Using a task analysis

A task analysis can work well to identify goals for children with additional support needs, especially if the goals relate to the development of specific skills and/or knowledge. When you have identified a goal with a child's family, you can demonstrate the possible objectives by using the task analysis as a communication tool and a tool for consistent support for the child. A task analysis provides details of the step-by-step actions that are taken to achieve a task. The analysis also considers the sequencing involved and allows you to track success.

Each step might be an objective, depending on the child's skills.

The task analysis shows each step clearly. This enables you to prioritise skill development. The skills you see as most important or possible will be the ones you focus on with the child.

Example

Using a task analysis

Task analysis for brushing teeth

1. Pick up the toothbrush.
2. Wet the toothbrush (involves operating a tap).
3. Take the cap off the tube of toothpaste.
4. Put paste on the toothbrush (involves squeezing the tube).
5. Brush the outside of the bottom row of teeth (requires brush movement).
6. Brush the outside of the top row of teeth.
7. Brush the biting surface of the top row of teeth.
8. Brush the biting surface of the bottom row of teeth.
9. Brush the inside surface of the bottom row of teeth.
10. Brush the inside surface of the top row of teeth.
11. Spit (involves not swallowing toothpaste).
12. Rinse the brush.
13. Place the brush in its holder.
14. Grasp cup.
15. Fill cup with water.
16. Rinse teeth with water.
17. Spit.
18. Place cup down or in holder.
19. Wipe mouth on towel.
20. Screw cap back on tube of toothpaste.
21. Place toothpaste and toothbrush back in its place.

Setting the objectives

To set objectives, you must break down your goal into small, workable parts. To create objectives, prioritise and brainstorm.

Prioritise

Identify needs that are most important and prioritise these. When you prioritise, you may need to break down each step further.

Brainstorm

Identify each part of the goal by identifying where the child is now and where you eventually want the child to be. Ask yourself what steps the child will need to take to move from their current situation to meet the goal. The task analysis is useful here.

After prioritising and brainstorming, you will be able to select the objectives that you feel can be achieved within a short space of time. These objectives are the ones you would insert into your first inclusion plan. Further objectives can be added as you review the plan.

4B Adapting and reflecting on the plan

Once you understand the child’s additional support needs, you must review the current resources in the service to see if any routines need to be altered or any equipment needs to be adapted. You may need to gather additional resources or seek other sources of information. Reflecting on the effectiveness of your strategies and use of resources is an essential part of the process.



Adapting the environment and routines

To implement an inclusion plan, you may need to adapt the existing environment or routines in the service. To do this, you need to review the existing service environment and routines against your policies, processes and practices.

Once you have identified what you want to achieve, you can assess whether you have the necessary resources (equipment and personnel) to implement it. Daily routines must also be reviewed to determine whether they need to be adapted to achieve the inclusion goals for the child. You may use a checklist similar to the following based on your plan.

Details from the child’s inclusion plan	Needs to be addressed	Resources required	Routines needed	Collaboration required
Long-term goal				
Objectives				
Strategies				

Safety and legal requirements

Resources may be affected by the safety and legal requirements of your service, such as:

- ▶ staff ratios
- ▶ behavioural problems
- ▶ medical problems
- ▶ duty-of-care responsibilities
- ▶ sun safe policy
- ▶ high-risk activities
- ▶ location of activities.

Reasonable modifications

If a person with a disability meets the essential entry requirements to your service, then you must make changes or reasonable adjustments so that they can participate. Some examples of adjustments that may be required are outlined in the following table.

Adjustment	Examples
Modifying the premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Adding ramps ▶ Lowering benches ▶ Modifying toilets ▶ Ensuring that rooms are accessible
Modifying or providing equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Including adapted sports equipment or art resources ▶ Providing specific computer software ▶ Providing specialised seating or reaching devices
Changing program delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Providing materials in different formats ▶ Providing language support ▶ Altering the way activities are implemented

The modifications required can be identified by considering the person's specific needs. You must also consider the health and safety needs of yourself and other staff involved in working with the person.

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) does not require changes to be made if they will cause major difficulties or unreasonable costs to the service. This is called 'unjustifiable hardship'. If adjustments cause hardship, it is up to the service to show that they are too costly or impractical to implement.

You may need to contact your Inclusion Agency (IA), which can provide advice on inclusion resources and strategies.

Gathering additional resources or information

Any plan must take into account the resources available to you. It will not be achieved if you expect or hope for time, space, people or material resources you cannot access. The financial considerations of the family should not limit the child's access to materials.

Additional resources can be acquired from a range of different services, which were mentioned in section 1B. Your IA can also help you find appropriate services.



Reflecting on effectiveness

Regular reflection on the effectiveness of your plan is essential. There is a range of things you can review, and each of these will help you decide what to do next or how to improve on what you have been doing.

The purpose of reflection is described in the following table.

Purpose of reflection	Description
To identify spontaneous issues that arise	This provides further observation records and information that may be used to adjust the plan.
To clarify needs and/or identify more suitable ways of planning for the child	This may result in modifications or adaptations that increase the value of the experience.
To identify what worked and what didn't work, whether the objective was met, whether the resources were appropriate and whether enough equipment or support was provided	This allows you to identify whether children gained what you expected from the experience, and to determine your next step.
To see what you can do to extend on this plan	This provides a guide to what flow-on activity seems reasonable or obvious.
To gain other people's perspectives	Gaining other people's thoughts on the plan and how you provided it, how you might improve the plan and any other feedback will help your development.

Different types of review

Different types of reflection or review will occur at different points in the plan, and involve different amounts of information and time. These differences depend on:

- ▶ your personal programming style
- ▶ service expectations based on its philosophy and policies
- ▶ industry expectations
- ▶ regulations
- ▶ quality assurance and continuous improvement.

To ensure review occurs at appropriate intervals, you should take into account the tasks required for review. For example, a review that needs to include a meeting of those involved, report writing or other detailed involvement will occur less frequently than one where you are able to informally discuss the outcomes with a parent or co-worker. Review times should be included in your plan.

Practice task 8

1. Where might you find the following resources? Include the contact details.

a. Jumbo triangular grip crayons

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b. Asthma training

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c. A chair system or positioning form for a child who is unable to sit unaided

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2. Write **three** objectives based on the task analysis for washing hands you developed in Practice task 7.

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3. What materials and equipment would you require to support the children to complete these **three** objectives?

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Learning checkpoint 4

Developing a plan for support and inclusion

Read the case study, then complete the questions that follow.

Case study

Tessa, four years, has completed an orientation process. She has an acquired brain injury and limited hearing. You have met with her specialists and her mother a number of times and have gathered the following information about Tessa:

- ▶ She wears nappies.
- ▶ She has a limited vocabulary, but has not been heard using any speech or making any sounds at your service.

Tessa is from a single-parent family and has an older school-aged brother. Her mother is currently trying to toilet train Tessa. She is also working on Tessa's vocabulary and is planning to introduce some simple sign language.

You have contacted the local services in the community that specialise in supporting children with specific additional support needs.

1. Develop one goal for Tessa based on the information you have gathered from the specialists and her mother.

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2. Develop **two** objectives for Tessa based on the goal you developed.

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3. Explain how you might need to adapt the environment and routines of your service to ensure that Tessa is fully included in the group.

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4. Identify **two** strategies you can introduce immediately to encourage Tessa's participation.

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5. List any legislation, procedures or workplace practices that you may need to consider as you make a plan for Tessa.

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6. Create an inclusion plan for Tessa.
You may use the following table or one similar.

Inclusion plan
Name of child: Child's age: Date of plan: Date to be reviewed: How often the plan should be reviewed:
Those involved in developing the plan:
Details of the child's needs: (Including the child's health status and specific inclusion needs)
Things the child does well: (Including the child's abilities and interests)

What you know about the child's background information and influences: (Including the child's cultural values and requirements)
Goals:
Objectives:
EYLF/MTOP outcomes:
Resources and materials needed:
Strategies for achieving the objectives in relation to the environment:
Strategies for achieving the objectives in relation to the program:
How the child can be involved or supported:
How the parents can be involved and supported:

7. Explain how you would involve Tessa's specialists in developing and reflecting on the effectiveness and impact of the inclusion plan. Outline one method you might use.

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Topic 5

In this topic you will learn about:

5A Supporting a child's entry into the service

5B Adopting inclusive attitudes and practices

5C Investigating and trialling strategies

Implementing strategies to meet the child's additional needs

Plans are only useful if they are put into practice. The implementation of your inclusion plan is no different. Once you have collected information and put strategies into place, you are ready to support children and their families in effective ways.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
✓	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
✓	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

5A Supporting a child's entry into the service

You must support a child's entry into the service, particularly if the child has additional support needs.

Orientation is a time for both parent and child to get to know the service and to meet the educators. It is also a time for children to get used to being apart from their parents. The process of orientation allows you to get to know a new child and family, and collect information about them. By its conclusion, you should have built a relationship with both parents and child, and have enough information to support the child's additional needs as required.



Watch this video about conducting an orientation.

Formal methods of gathering information

It takes time to establish a relationship with a child and their family. During this relationship development, you should be collecting information in informal ways, such as through conversations at drop-off and pick-up times each day.

However, when a child has additional support needs, formal methods are also required. This is to ensure you have gathered all the necessary details. You may use:

- ▶ an enrolment form or interview
- ▶ a referral agent
- ▶ a meeting
- ▶ a survey
- ▶ a planning strategy.

Your service will have a procedure in place and strategies to guide this process. This process primarily involves the child, the parent, the educator and other staff. If the child or family has additional support needs, other service providers and care support personnel may need to be consulted.



How you collect information and assess needs depends on whether you need to:

- ▶ organise a formal meeting prior to orientation to gain information from specialists or others caring for the child
- ▶ involve the Inclusion Agency (IA) to assess needs and get advice
- ▶ gain training or professional development
- ▶ adapt your service environment
- ▶ obtain resources (material and human resources).

Based on this initial information, you should be able to create an orientation process that may span a number of days or weeks.

Example**Supporting a child's entry into the service**

Ella attends care with her father staying the entire time and being involved in play and care with her. This enables both of them to become familiar with the environment. Meryl, an educator, observes the parent and child, and gathers information about how Ella reacts and interacts with her father.

After a few weeks, Ella's father continues to stay the entire time, but spends more time talking to Meryl while he is there. He assists with Ella's routines with Meryl close by.

Gradually, Meryl takes over the routine tasks and begins to interact directly with Ella.

Reflecting on the level of support provided

Your service should have a policy and processes for reflecting on the enrolment procedure.

Strategies for this reflection may include considering the following questions:

- ▶ Did we consider diversity and the family's culture?
- ▶ Did we make the family feel welcome and comfortable?
- ▶ What did we do to facilitate communication, particularly with families who have specific communication needs?
- ▶ Was our communication effective?
- ▶ Are there strategies in place for sharing information between families and educators during orientation, settling in and on an ongoing basis?
- ▶ Did we listen to the family and include their perspectives?
- ▶ Did we provide opportunities for the family to have a meaningful role in the service?
- ▶ Did we share information with the family? Was there any information we held back? Why?

As a result of these reflections, policies, procedures and practices may need to be adjusted. Education may be required in relation to culture and special needs. The child's individual inclusion plan must be reviewed in light of this reflection, and then developed or adapted to address any concerns.

Every program must respond to spontaneous issues or successes that arise. This means more than just a quick word to acknowledge a child's success or a note to remind you to extend an activity. An adaptable program should respond to interests and needs immediately, which will:

- ▶ allow children time to explore their ideas, practise their skills and demonstrate their capabilities
- ▶ provide appropriate materials and resources, including time and space, human support and safety requirements
- ▶ enable children to continue play
- ▶ encourage children to participate.

Example

Considering individual children's needs

Gregory, an educator, is at the sandpit with three children when they find an insect. He responds to the children's interest, but also considers the additional support needs of two of the children. Gregory:

- ▶ responds enthusiastically
- ▶ asks open questions
- ▶ offers information
- ▶ links with children's current knowledge
- ▶ discusses how another child kept stick insects at home.

Gregory's adaptations for each child are presented in the following table.

Child	Strategies for adaptation
Child one High intelligence level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Added new ideas and investigations ▶ Involved her in creating an investigation area ▶ Provided access to web pages relating to specific bugs ▶ Developed a chart of insect types using scientific names
Child two Little use of limbs and poor speech, but clear understanding of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Moved him closer to the insect so he could see it ▶ Placed the insect on his hand (after asking if this was okay) ▶ Spoke words related to the insect clearly and slowly (such as 'legs', 'head', 'antenna')

Practice task 9

1. Review a service orientation policy and procedures. Summarise the points that refer to the support provided for children with additional support needs. Do you think any of these points could be expanded on? Why or why not?

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5B Adopting inclusive attitudes and practices

Wherever possible, you should always model inclusive attitudes and practices to encourage others to do the same. Ensure that you involve families in any plans you make and in any successes, developments and discussions.

To help others accept and value difference, try to encourage them by presenting an attitude and actions that:

- ▶ acknowledge difference; recognise it, talk about it and show an understanding of it
- ▶ demonstrate that being different should not be embarrassing; it should be celebrated, shared, fun and exciting.



Your communication should always be non-judgmental, open, honest and clear. By listening, taking concerns seriously and working together to develop strategies and address concerns, you can support others to improve their inclusive practices. The principles of your inclusive practice should consider the needs of others, and work towards their inclusion in the team's shared goals.

Some educators feel uncomfortable with inclusion because they are placed in situations they are not prepared for or do not fully understand. If this is the case, offer them support so they do not feel embarrassed or incompetent.

It takes a team of people to successfully implement an inclusion plan. It is your role to effectively communicate with and support the team to achieve the best possible outcome for the child.

Supporting educators

Educators of children with additional support needs must be provided with clear directions about:

- ▶ the reasons or rationale for any inclusion plan
- ▶ the limits and guidelines in the plan and the strategies to implement
- ▶ the roles they play in the plan
- ▶ how you can support each other, the child and their parents.

This information is essential if educators are to effectively and consistently carry out the strategies outlined in the inclusion plan.

By providing options for training (whether through support from you, another person in your service or external training opportunities), you ensure the educators on the support team are well prepared, and understand how and why to participate.

There will be situations that some educators can handle easily by themselves and others they may find difficult and need help with. In some circumstances educators may need time away from the child to recharge, or to gather their thoughts. Ensure the other educators are aware this is acceptable and that they are not expected to manage situations with no support.

Educators who are in contact with parents need to be clear about the parents' feelings, level of understanding and involvement in any inclusion plan. These educators should be supported or provided with training on how to share information about the child with parents to ensure they are not unduly concerned, or given misleading or confusing feedback. An educator who approaches a parent and receives a negative or upsetting outcome may feel concerned about further communication.

Involving and supporting children

The methods you use to involve and support a child in an inclusion plan depend on the child's age and stage of development. Involve and support children by:

- ▶ listening to the child's ideas and concerns
- ▶ being clear about the child's needs
- ▶ setting realistic and achievable objectives
- ▶ managing change
- ▶ being consistent.

Consistency is essential. It provides a clear message, offers security and allows children to react in predictable ways.

Involving the family

Always coordinate your actions with the family. You must also respect the fact that some families may not have the ability or interest in adopting your strategies or the resources to do so. They may not even see the child's needs the same way you do.

In some situations, the family may agree with the goals and strategies you implement, but also agree they will not follow these themselves. Again, respect this choice.

How you involve and support families in the plan to guide their child's inclusion determines the level of trust and confidence they will have in your abilities to care for their child. Apart from the general involvement activities and actions you have in place every day, you also need to:

- ▶ respect their expertise
- ▶ use their ideas
- ▶ request their insight
- ▶ respect their need for support
- ▶ respect parent goals and objectives
- ▶ keep them up to date, and share information and feedback.

Practice task 10

Read the case study, then complete the questions that follow.

Case study

Inclusion plan

Name of child: Joel

Date of birth: 26/02/15

Date of plan: 30/01/18

Date to be reviewed: 14/02/18

Those involved in developing the plan:

Mother, qualified educator, service director

Details of the child's needs:

Joel has recently moved to Australia from Spain for his father's job. Currently, his mother is not working. His parents speak English, but Spanish is the language spoken at home. Joel currently speaks little to no English. They have placed Joel in your service so that he can make some friends and become more familiar with Australia and the English language before he goes to school.

Things the child does well:

Joel is a friendly child and tries to join in with the other children in the room.

What you know about the child's needs:

Sometimes Joel gets frustrated when the other children do not understand what he is saying. At these times he takes himself to the reading corner and sits quietly looking at pictures.

Goals:

For Joel to interact verbally and nonverbally with others for a range of purposes.

Objectives:

- ▶ For Joel to participate in shared experiences with one other child, with an educator supporting communication as they interact to complete an activity together.
- ▶ For Joel to learn and use the English words 'yes', 'no', 'hungry', 'thirsty', 'my name is ...' and 'toilet'.
- ▶ For the children in the group to learn the Spanish words for 'yes', 'no', 'hungry', 'thirsty', 'my name is ...' and 'toilet'.

EYLF/MTOP outcomes:

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Resources and materials needed:

- ▶ An educator to work one-on-one with Joel for a number of hours each day.
- ▶ Picture cards to represent the target words.

Strategies for achieving the objectives in relation to the environment:

- ▶ Ensure all educators are aware of Joel's situation and are able to help as described.
- ▶ Ensure picture cards are accessible to adults and children.
- ▶ Develop new picture cards as new words are spontaneously shared by Joel and other children.

Strategies for achieving the objectives in relation to the program:

- ▶ Educators to support Joel and other children to use verbal and nonverbal methods for communicating during activities.
- ▶ Use the picture cards and both English and Spanish to encourage the children to communicate.
- ▶ Educators to talk to children about what they think other children are telling them without language.

How the child can be involved or supported:

- ▶ For the educator to be attuned, and respond sensitively and appropriately to Joel's efforts of communication.
- ▶ For the educator to listen to and respond to Joel's approximations of words.
- ▶ For the educator to model language relevant to the context and encourage Joel to express himself through language to the other children.

How the parents can be involved and supported:

- ▶ Invite Joel's mother to come in twice a week to help the educators in Joel's room. Ask Joel's mother if she will cook Spanish omelettes one day for lunch.
- ▶ Share the words that the children (Joel and the group) are learning in both Spanish and English.
- ▶ Invite Joel's mother to teach the children some Spanish games and songs.

Prepare a talk for the educators working with you and Joel. It should include information about:

- ▶ the service policies and procedures relating to inclusion
- ▶ the attitudes and practices you expect
- ▶ how the inclusion plan meets the individual child's needs.

5C Investigating and trialling strategies

All those involved in developing and implementing a child's inclusion plan will have different philosophies, experiences and ideas on how to resolve issues and address difficulties. When you are investigating a new strategy, consider how appropriate these conflicting ideas are in relation to the child's needs, the service philosophy, child's rights and parental approval.

Involving others

Parents should be involved in any decision-making about strategies and trials. It is essential to acknowledge:

- ▶ any issues that parents foresee
- ▶ their past experiences and previous strategies
- ▶ their personal feelings
- ▶ their skills and knowledge.

By doing this, you will gain a much better understanding of the child's background. This will save you from attempting strategies that may have been tried before unsuccessfully.

Sometimes the child can be involved in developing their own inclusion plan. Children suited to involvement are those who understand their own needs. They may be at school age, late preschool age or simply able to communicate at this level.

The child may be able to provide insight into how they would like things to be. If nothing else, the child may need some time to get used to any change in the environment or the way people react. Older children may need to be told what the changes will be, which gives them an opportunity to understand what is happening and to show that they understand your ideas. In some situations, the child may come up with a more suitable alternative.

Implementing strategies suggested by others

There are a number of people who may be able to contribute strategies to your inclusion plan, as outlined in the following table.

Other contributors	What they can offer	How you might gather this information
Families and guardians	Home life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Whether behaviour is considered out-of-character or within expectations ▶ How the child is different in various environments ▶ Who the child responds to Triggers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What strategies they use ▶ What strategies do and do not work ▶ What strategies they disagree with you using 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Discussions ▶ Meetings ▶ Surveys ▶ Forms

Other contributors	What they can offer	How you might gather this information
Colleagues and co-workers	<p>Observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Their experiences with the family and child ▶ Whether behaviour is considered out of character or within expectations <p>Triggers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What strategies they have used – successfully or unsuccessfully ▶ Training or experience in any area ▶ Particular skills and abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Observation records ▶ Portfolios ▶ Behaviour plans ▶ Discussions <p>(You must have parental permission)</p>
Specialists	<p>Diagnosis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Insight into behavioural problems ▶ Information and education ▶ Links to other services and resources ▶ Stimulants and situations to avoid ▶ Therapeutic goals and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Discussions ▶ Assessments ▶ Reports ▶ Meetings <p>(You must have parental permission)</p>

External sources

Some support and inclusion strategies will be designed or suggested by external sources, such as the following.

Families and guardians

The child's parents may be able to provide you with:

- ▶ options for response
- ▶ strategies you may not have considered earlier
- ▶ insights into things that happen outside of care.

It is essential that you consider these ideas.

Colleagues

Your colleagues will also have ideas and experiences that can help you interpret behaviour, and may in turn enhance your entire program. They may also have an alternative view to you. This may explain or raise further concerns that you had not considered before.

Specialists

Strategies developed by specialists must be incorporated into the child's inclusion plan, and will sometimes need to be adapted and implemented. To do this, you need to take into account the effect on all educators, other children and the service as a whole. You also need to assess these strategies in relation to your service philosophy and policies.

The strategies and information you receive from specialists should help you to:

- ▶ understand the specific and unique needs of the child
- ▶ understand the specific nature of any disability or impairment
- ▶ design and plan experiences that the child can gain the most value from
- ▶ adapt the environment appropriately
- ▶ help others to understand and respect the child's needs
- ▶ advocate for the child.

Responding to daily needs

Reflect on and be realistic about the events of each day. Use your support systems and feedback methods to identify when you are implementing worthwhile strategies.

When thinking about how to respond, consider the following.

Children's needs	<p>Maslow's hierarchy of needs describes the basic needs of human beings. This psychological theory can be useful in relation to children; for example, by considering a child's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ food, rest, sleep and basic bodily functions ▶ safety, security and limits ▶ feelings of love and belonging ▶ self-esteem and need for respect, attention and appreciation. <p>These are needs we all share. Children, like adults, have good days and bad days. Don't rush or put pressure on a child if they revert to undesirable behaviours.</p> <p>Take time to see what happens. It may simply be that they did not sleep well or there are issues to be addressed. If the situation continues, it will require further attention. First, talk to educators and parents. Consultation will help you identify the nature of the change in behaviour, which will help you decide whether the plan needs to be reviewed and adapted.</p>
Your needs	<p>You will have days when you require additional help from others to implement the inclusion plan. You may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ need help to follow the directions of a specialist or support person ▶ feel overwhelmed by the child's needs ▶ not be achieving what you want and feel you have misinterpreted the child's needs or abilities ▶ be unable to persist for long on your own ▶ need feedback to identify whether you are persisting for too long ▶ need feedback to identify whether parts of your program are working against the plan ▶ need to reconsider time, space, people, materials, safety and aesthetics ▶ make modifications or adaptations due to inappropriate resources.

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2. For each situation that you would not trial, identify whether you would modify the strategy for trial. If so, explain how.

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Summary

- ▶ Orientation is a time for both parent and child to get to know the service and meet the educators. Children can begin to see what it will be like to be apart from their parents. Orientation also provides you with an opportunity to get to know a new child and family, and collect information about them.
- ▶ It takes time to establish a relationship with any child and their family. During this relationship development, you can collect information in informal ways, such as through conversations at drop-off and pick-up each day. However, when children have additional support needs, formal methods are also required to ensure you have gathered all of the necessary details.
- ▶ Modelling inclusive practice is a powerful way to encourage and educate others to adopt inclusive attitudes and practices.
- ▶ Your communication should always be non-judgmental, open, honest and clear. By listening, taking others' concerns seriously and working together to develop strategies and address concerns, you can support others to improve their inclusive practices.
- ▶ All those involved in a child's inclusion plan will have different philosophies, experiences and ideas about how to resolve issues and address difficulties. When investigating a new strategy, it is important to consider how appropriate these conflicting ideas are in relation to the child's needs, the service philosophy, children's rights and parental approval.

Learning checkpoint 5

Implementing strategies to meet the child's additional needs

Part A

Read the case study, then complete the questions that follow.

Case study

You work with a group of school-age children and are supported by two other educators. As the group leader, you are responsible for developing the plans for the children and sharing these with the other educators.

Today you have been working with Denise, who has a physical disability. Denise is learning to move her body from one place to another. Denise is very strong-willed and is determined to reach her next milestone. She has almost succeeded in her task and although she needs occasional breaks, she seems to be enjoying the challenge. You are tired, however, and at times you feel frustrated.

You receive a report from a specialist. The report includes several suggested goals and objectives to help with Denise's additional needs.

1. What would your next step be in relation to working with Denise to help her meet her next milestone? Consider the following:
 - ▶ The child's needs
 - ▶ Your needs
 - ▶ The success of the strategy
 - ▶ The role of others
 - ▶ The level of support provided for the child

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2. What would your next step be in relation to the report you received from the specialist? Consider the following:
- ▶ Your service policies, procedures and work practices
 - ▶ Those involved in supporting the child
 - ▶ Actions that need to be taken to put the goals and objectives into place

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Part B

1. Refer to the inclusion plan you developed in Learning checkpoint 4. Discuss the inclusion plan with your supervisor or colleague, and provide notes of the discussion. Gain their opinion on the following things:
- a. Your inclusion plan strategies, its level of support and whether the plan is easy to understand

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- b. If they would trial the strategies with Tessa if presented with the plan. Why/why not?

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c. What they would do to support Tessa's entry into their service

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d. How they encourage others to adopt inclusive attitudes

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2. Reflect on the feedback you gathered from your supervisor or colleague.

a. What information might you like to investigate further if you were supporting Tessa?

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b. What information might you like to trial if you were supporting Tessa?

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Topic 6

In this topic you will learn about:

- 6A Sharing information about progress**

- 6B Identifying and discussing issues of concern**

- 6C Monitoring the impact of new strategies**

Monitoring and reviewing strategies

As with all other plans for individual children in the service, a plan for inclusion must be monitored and reviewed. This means that goals and objectives can be applied, the child is able to achieve and the plan evolves. Consistent application and review is essential to maintain the child's ability to succeed. If your plan falls short and is not revised, the child may suffer long-term concerns, or be faced with barriers that damage their self-esteem and confidence.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
✓	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
✓	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

6A Sharing information about progress

A significant part of developing and implementing an inclusion plan is collaborating and sharing information about the child's progress with other people. You need this type of objective feedback to gain a better view of how the plan is working and where it needs adapting to better meet the child's needs.

Sharing information

Information about progress should be shared among all concerned in the child's education and care. This may include:

- ▶ the child
- ▶ the parents
- ▶ educators
- ▶ support professionals
- ▶ medical professionals.



Sharing can be achieved formally or informally; for example, sometimes a quick telephone conversation is appropriate and other times a written report is required.

Input from other people involved in the care of the child is necessary to gain a holistic view. As a group, you can objectively assess the strategies being trialled, identify any changes that might be required, and introduce suggested strategies or adaptations to service delivery to better enhance the child's learning.

The Privacy Act

The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) contains 13 Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), which are detailed in Schedule 1 of the Act.

In Australia, there are strict guidelines for sharing information about other people. Commonwealth and state legislation strongly supports the right of all people (including children) to protect and control the flow of their personal information.

Your service must comply with legislation such as the Privacy Act and will have procedures for sharing information. As an educator, it is important for you to know when you can share confidential information, how to do so appropriately, and to always gain family permission before consulting with others about a child.

For more information about privacy, refer to: <http://aspirelr.link/oaic>

Cultural and linguistic responsiveness

There are a number of different ways to share information about a child; for example:

- ▶ a written report
- ▶ a formal meeting
- ▶ an oral presentation
- ▶ an informal conversation
- ▶ written notes.

Abide by workplace practices and follow the models of communication that have already been established. However, for your communication to be truly effective, you must also be responsive to the cultural and linguistic differences and needs of the people you encounter.

For example, you may need to contact an interpreter to help you communicate. If a third party will become involved, the parents of the child must give their permission. If possible, avoid using family members and children as interpreters.

Other methods of responsive communication may involve:

- ▶ modelling or demonstrating
- ▶ use of movements, hand or arm signals
- ▶ communication devices
- ▶ braille
- ▶ photos
- ▶ video or audio recordings
- ▶ diagrams.

Evaluating your communication

Regularly evaluate the way you communicate. The following table outlines some evaluation criteria.

Criteria	What to consider	Description
Self-esteem and confidence	Ask yourself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Do they feel comfortable using this form of communication with you, with their peers and in public? ▶ Is this form of communication used by others (peers/all adults) in the program or just by this person? 	It is essential that the communication used is valued by all. If possible, all those in the environment should use this communication type. Try to learn some basic words to use with the child and their parents, and determine whether they use another language or another form of communication (such as Auslan).
Activities	Ask yourself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Does this form of communication allow the person to participate fully? ▶ Is this communication style practical in all situations? 	There may be situations where the person is capable of following only one type of communication style, but in many cases, a range of forms can be used. By sharing and incorporating a variety of language types, you are respecting all communication and providing an unbiased and inclusive approach to your program.

Criteria	What to consider	Description
Health and safety	Ask yourself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Does the person understand limits and guidelines? ▶ Is the person aware of rules, codes and requirements? 	This evaluation is particularly relevant in relation to those with additional support needs. It is essential that they are included in the sharing of information as they participate in your program. The method you use to communicate instructions and guidelines will depend on the abilities and needs of the person you are communicating with.

Practice task 12

1. Provide examples of **five** communication methods you could use to share information about a child's progress. For each example, describe why you would use this type of communication.

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2. Summarise the procedures and workplace practices in a service that relate to privacy legislation and sharing information.

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6B Identifying and discussing issues of concern

Plans are excellent methods for ensuring success, but don't always go as expected. Different children and adults react in their own ways, and you may need to make alterations quickly to ensure positive outcomes occur.



Issues of concern

When implementing an inclusion plan, it is quite common to encounter a lack of progress, or for new issues of concern to develop.

You may encounter issues such as the following:

- ▶ The child finds the plan to be concerning, so they rebel or become fearful of what is happening.
- ▶ The child develops alternative issues based on the changes that have been made.
- ▶ Educators are inconsistent in their application of the plan.
- ▶ Families, specialists or other professionals have second thoughts or other ideas about how the plan might be implemented.

These issues may have been identified formally through the regular observation and review processes in your service, or may have been identified informally through feedback and general discussion with other educators and the child's family.

When issues of concern arise, communication must occur. If the child can participate and tell you how they feel or why they are demonstrating certain difficulties, they should be involved. Other issues need to be dealt with immediately. If a meeting is not possible, speak to individuals on the phone, in person or via email, and then coordinate the information until a resolution is identified.

Establishing and maintaining the information exchange

There will be fewer issues of concern if you establish and maintain a good exchange of information with the appropriate people about the child's inclusion plan. The people who may need to be included in this information exchange are:

- ▶ parents
- ▶ educators
- ▶ support professionals
- ▶ medical professionals.

Usually any issues of concern regarding the child will be discussed as part of:

- ▶ a staff meeting
- ▶ a conference of educators, parents and people from other services
- ▶ one-to-one consultation
- ▶ a referral from a service/agency
- ▶ enrolment with no referral.

The success of your plan depends on the quality of information exchanged with the family and appropriate community members about the child’s needs and care strategies.

Input from different people who encounter the child in different contexts and under different circumstances can enhance your knowledge of the child’s needs and progress. Collective, collaborative and cooperative support for the child will always achieve the most positive results for the child and those involved in their support.

Your relationship with all those involved should be clear and open, respectful and responsive. Regular communication through informal and formal channels is vital to ensure that the relationship and the exchange of information are maintained.

The following outlines some communication methods that may be required.

Daily communication	Welcome the family and find out about what has been happening outside the service. Gauge the child’s emotions and needs, and address any issues that arise immediately.
Update enrolment forms	Information continually changes and needs regular updating.
Conduct enrolment interviews	Orientation will progress more effectively if sufficient time is provided.
Use referral agents	Share information from other services used by the family; this may be ongoing or a one-off situation.
Organise regular meetings	Uninterrupted time where information about the child’s inclusion plan can be exchanged, discussed and negotiated should be scheduled throughout the year or more frequently, depending on the family’s needs and abilities.
Survey	Ask about particular information; this may be done regularly or just on certain occasions.
Develop a planning strategy	Involve parents at planning times and request their knowledge of certain areas and/or needs, goals or hopes for their child.

Your service should have procedures in place about how to appropriately establish and maintain this exchange of information. Keep in mind the legislation that surrounds a person’s right to privacy and the exchange of information. Be professional, and never overstep the guidelines set out by your service.

Example

Sharing information about a child

Hayden attends a long day care service three days a week and family day care two days a week. The long day care service organises meetings with parents and a speech therapist once a month to identify Hayden's needs, and gain permission and support to plan an individual program and strategies for his development.

Staff at the service have never heard Hayden speak at all even though he is four years old. He does not settle well when he is dropped off and becomes upset during the day at transition times. This matches the experience of his speech therapist, who has also only seen Hayden in distress.

The speech therapist decides to visit him at the family day care he has been attending since he was six months old. Hayden is completely different there. The educator at the family day care uses different strategies to the service educators. Hayden is verbal (although showing delays) and interacts with the other two children in care. He participates independently in routines.

The family day care educator becomes involved in the service's meetings and shares her successful strategies with others. She also benefits from the information that is shared at the meeting.

Seeking and gaining family permission

When working with a child who requires additional support, and is demonstrating new or increased issues of concern, you may require the support and guidance of an outside authority or referral body.

Whenever you involve an outside body in the support of a child, you must gain parental permission. Always clarify that your intention is to gain support and advice on how you can best provide care and education that meets the child's needs.

An issue of concern should be discussed with the child's family and others involved in the child's care. Make sure that you have done your research and come to the meeting with a list of appropriate contacts for the family to consider.

You must be responsive to the family's concerns, and be prepared to allow them time to reflect on the situation before making a decision. You may need to:

- ▶ arrange for the family to meet with the other contacts
- ▶ help them decide whether they are comfortable giving permission.

Remember, the family has a legal right to privacy and confidentiality. You cannot build a productive, collaborative relationship with the family without showing them this basic respect.

Any information collected about the child is confidential and should be stored securely. Family members should be made aware of who will have access to files within the organisation.

6C Monitoring the impact of new strategies

Implementing new strategies may be stressful for you, as well as the parents and child. However, you need to keep in mind that change can affect people in different ways and may not have the outcome that you expect.

Watch this video about monitoring strategies.



Monitoring new strategies closely

Closely monitor the impact of new strategies and activities on the child. Look at how the child reacts, how educators are implementing the strategies and whether these strategies are achieving the planned results. New strategies that go unmonitored may result in long-term issues that take time to resolve. New strategies may also cause issues psychologically or emotionally, creating further concerns.



Include monitoring as part of your normal curriculum plan to ensure that it occurs. Educators should be aware of their role in observing and recording information about how the child is reacting to their strategies. They should report any significant change or concern.

Parents should also be monitoring the child's reaction and reporting any shifts in their behaviour. They may notice changes in the home environment, the child may tell them something that is concerning, or they may begin to change their attitude toward the service by refusing to attend.

All issues should be documented. Ideally, problematic strategies should be removed, adapted or replaced.

The following table specifies some questions to help determine whether a strategy is effective, and whether it should be adapted to meet a child's specific needs.

Evaluating new strategies and activities

- ▶ Did the child enjoy the experience?
- ▶ What happened – how did the child respond to the experience?
- ▶ Was the objective/target/goal achieved?
- ▶ Did all children involved enjoy the experience?
- ▶ Was the setting of the experience appropriate?
- ▶ Was the timing of the experience right?
- ▶ Were the materials and equipment suitable?
- ▶ Did you respond to the messages or communication the child gave you?
- ▶ Was your language or communication appropriate?
- ▶ Did you listen to the child?
- ▶ Did you ask the child open-ended questions?
- ▶ Did you encourage and positively reinforce the child's learning?

Further questions that relate to children's specific needs

- ▶ Did the child face any handicap?
- ▶ Did the strategy cause any side effects?
- ▶ Did the child participate to their full potential?
- ▶ Were there any barriers or interruptions to participation?
- ▶ Should there be modifications to this activity to allow for greater participation?
- ▶ Was the experience presented in a way that represents your value of difference?
- ▶ Did the experience provide enough challenge and risk-taking for this child?
- ▶ Are there more appropriate communication methods that could be used?
- ▶ Did the experience highlight a need for additional support for the child, yourself or others?
- ▶ Could others have been involved more effectively?

Many of your strategies will be evaluated, recorded and attached to your inclusion plan. Other evaluations may be linked to a regular evaluation strategy, such as a planning or curriculum format. One way to record evaluations is to establish a diary or communication book. The benefit of this recording method is that content can remain confidential. If kept in the child's bag, you and the parent can add information to this diary and share successes, ask questions, challenge ideas and voice concerns. This method can integrate both the home and service environments and allow you to compare the child's behaviour.

Identifying and responding to barriers as the strategies are implemented

As you continue to monitor and evaluate the inclusion program, further issues and barriers may arise. Most of these are focused on why the inclusion program is not working. To identify these barriers, ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ Did I support and train other educators enough to implement the plan?
- ▶ Did I gain further information about the child's needs or background?
- ▶ Were the objectives achievable?
- ▶ Were the strategies appropriate and successful?
- ▶ Were there any issues or successes experienced in regard to the resources, environment and program?
- ▶ Were the child and parents successfully involved?



Reasons that an inclusion plan is not working may be obvious. Think about the issues outlined in the following table and how others may be able to support you to overcome these problems.

Issue	Details	Who can help
You have misunderstood the directions of a specialist or support person.	Ensure you take the time to ask questions and be clear about what is suggested.	If strategies are provided to you via a report, ask the parent's permission to contact the specialist. This is the best way to clarify any areas.
You are intimidated by the child's needs.	<p>You may need some extra help from a support service or specialist.</p> <p>You may also need to set some strategies for becoming more confident in dealing with this child.</p>	Sometimes you will have greater success if you delegate to another educator who is not intimidated by the child's needs, and may take a different approach.
You have misinterpreted the child's needs or abilities.	<p>You may have missed some details, misunderstood something you have been told or placed your own values on the situation inappropriately.</p> <p>The child may have a medical condition that has not been diagnosed.</p>	Contact an inclusion support professional or a relevant specialist (with parental permission).
You are not persisting long enough.	Persist long enough for the plan to take effect and for you to evaluate whether any positive outcomes are occurring.	Have another experienced educator review your program.
You are persisting too long.	<p>Some strategies just don't work. Persisting with these is useless.</p> <p>Be realistic about your strategies and change them if they are definitely inappropriate – develop a new plan.</p>	Have another experienced educator review your program.
Parts of your program are working against the plan.	<p>Think about how time, space, people, materials, safety and aesthetics influence the environment.</p> <p>Consider transition times as they are the most stressful.</p>	Have another experienced educator review your program.

Issue	Details	Who can help
Your modifications, adaptations or resources are not appropriate.	<p>There are nine types of adaptations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Size: the number of objectives a child is expected to achieve ▶ Time: the time allowed for the objectives to be achieved ▶ Level of support: the amount of assistance provided to the child ▶ Input: how instructions are delivered ▶ Difficulty: the level of challenge of the objective ▶ Output: options for how the child can respond to instructions ▶ Participation: the level of active involvement in a task ▶ Alternatives: changing the way the child participates ▶ Substitute programs: changing the program to suit the child 	Have another experienced educator review your program.

Practice task 14

Read the case study, then complete the questions that follow.

Case study

You have an inclusion plan that supports Quintin to develop skills in feeding himself. This means that he makes a mess at mealtimes and, although he is successfully eating his breakfast, it gets on his face and clothing. The other children are now choosing to move away from Quintin and say he is 'yucky' and 'too messy'. This is influencing his social interaction with the children, and causing an additional barrier.

1. What effect did the strategy of feeding himself have on Quintin?

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2. What barrier did this cause?

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3. If you wanted to change the goals of Quintin’s inclusion plan, what process would you need to follow?

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Summary

- ▶ Communication can be provided in many different ways. For it to be effective and worthwhile, you need to develop an appreciation for and understanding of the communication style of your audience.
- ▶ Demonstrate cultural responsiveness by sensitively communicating with an understanding and respect for culture.
- ▶ Lack of progress and the development of new issues and difficulties surrounding the provision of support and care can be identified through monitoring and review.
- ▶ The success of your plan depends on establishing and maintaining constant information exchange with family and appropriate community members about the child’s needs and care strategies.
- ▶ Whenever you involve an outside body, you must gain parental permission.
- ▶ There are a number of reasons that an inclusion plan may fail, and it is important to determine these reasons through evaluation.

Learning checkpoint 6

Monitoring and reviewing strategies

Part A

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Objective: For the child to eat breakfast independently using a spoon.

Strategies: Provide a spoon. Offer Weet-Bix mixed with milk to a thin consistency.

What happened: When the child used the spoon, it tipped sideways and the food slipped off. The child couldn't eat any food and became very frustrated.

1. What is the issue of concern in this situation?

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2. What effect does the current strategy have on the child?

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3. What is the barrier to this strategy?

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4. What would you do immediately in response to this situation? What strategies might you use to encourage participation?

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5. How might you share information about the child's progress with those concerned, and who would these people be?

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6. What would your new objective be?

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7. What legislation, procedures or workplace practices do you need to be aware of before you can implement this change?

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Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Objective: For the child to sit and participate in a three-minute small group experience.

Strategies: Use a topic that is interesting to the child. Make sure the child is familiar with the other children in the small group.

What happened: After 30 seconds, the child is still with the group, but is lying on the floor and looking out of the window.

1. What is the issue of concern in this situation?

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2. What effect does the current strategy have on the child?

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3. What is the barrier to this strategy?

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4. What would you do immediately in response to this situation? What strategies might you use to encourage participation?

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5. What would your new objective be?

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6. If you felt this child would benefit from gaining specialist support, what would you need to do before contacting a specialist?

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7. For each of the following families, determine the most suited culturally responsive method/s for sharing positive information about the child (there may be more than one method per family). Choose from the following methods:

- ▶ written records
- ▶ visual methods such as photos or work samples
- ▶ discussions

a. The parents speak Urdu and do not speak English.

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b. The parents are very involved with the child’s learning and wish to participate as much as possible in developing, monitoring and implementing plans for the child.

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c. The family are usually in a hurry or occupied with their child at drop off and pick up. They still want to be involved and to contribute to plans and goals.

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