

2.27 CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

All children are different and require a program that meets their individual interests, development, age and additional needs. By providing a positive and encouraging environment children have the potential to form an acceptance of differences and an awareness, respect and tolerance of others. Australia is a multicultural community and cultures and linguistic diversity should be acknowledged and respected.

PURPOSE

Lindfield Montessori School aims to provide a service with a Montessori philosophy which caters to the diverse need of children and families in the community. By working in partnership with families and community support agencies, Lindfield Montessori School will work on an Individual Education Plan for children with additional needs.

STRATEGIES

Any parent wishing to make an application on behalf of a child with a disability must accept the financial and geographical limitations of Lindfield Montessori School. Lindfield Montessori School is accessible by those who are not able to manage stairs. In the view of the school, it is reasonable for parents to expect:

- the existing program be modified to suit the child
- developmental goals be set to meet the particular disability
- regular consultation with parents and other professionals working with the child regarding such modifications and goals
- the provision of names of local organisations that may help in the care and education of the child

To expect more, would impose an unjustifiable hardship upon the staff and existing parents of Lindfield Montessori School.

All decision making is to be by the Directress in consultation with the child's parents. and other appropriate professionals.

To cater for the additional needs of individual children at Lindfield Montessori School, the following strategies are practiced:

- Books, music, cooking, crafts, clothing, singing, play equipment, posters, incorporate inclusive practices.
- Behaviour management programs are implemented when necessary.
- Planning is directed to the individual child's needs
- Where parents are from non-English speaking backgrounds, they are invited and encouraged to contribute knowledge of their own culture to enhance the overall program.
- Cultural and religious diversity is considered when planning activities.
- Cultural days are recognised and celebrated but not tokenistic.
- Staff of varied cultural backgrounds are invited to share their knowledge with other staff and parents.
- A wide variety of culturally and developmentally appropriate resources, games and objects are made available for the children to choose.
- Staff work hard to ensure that parents, families, and children feel welcome at the school.
- Input is welcomed particularly from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families. Contact with educators from other Montessori programmes that have expertise in this area is encouraged.
- Families are asked to provide as much information as possible about their child's general routine, cultural beliefs, celebrations, and any other information to support their positive experiences at school.
- Staff maintain contact with professionals who have specialised skills and appropriate training for professional development and assistance in developing individualised family service plans.
- Resources are sought whenever required to enhance individualised support for a child or family.
- The Directress, in conjunction with parents/guardians and also other professionals, will assess factors such as the child's self-help skills, physical independence, appropriate staff/child ratios, and other resources required by the school.
- When a child is enrolled and an additional need has been identified, a second meeting may be arranged with the child's primary caregivers, parents, and any other professionals associated with the care and education of the child.
- Meetings may be arranged to allow the discussion and exchange of information relating to the care and wellbeing of a particular child and to develop an Individual Plan (IP).
- The Directress will make follow up contact with special needs professionals or organisations to provide additional support and resources for staff as appropriate.
- Contact information for such support/resources shall be made readily available to staff.
- When observations indicate a possible special need has been identified by the Directress, parents will be advised of possible sources of assistance to access appropriate intervention.
- Staff and parents are advised that additional funding might be applied for from varying government and private organisations.

- Information is made available in other languages when appropriate. Use of interpreting services (telephone or community services) may be encouraged to ensure adequate communication.

Other strategies that may be taken include:

- Referrals to outside providers of intervention services.
- Invitation to intervention providers/therapists to observe the child within the learning environment (with parental permission).
- In-service and other professional development relating to specific disabilities or additional needs.
- Development of a library of resources relevant to specific disabilities or additional needs, available to staff including resource books, appropriate websites, contact numbers for support agencies.
- Encouraging the child's first language, appropriate preparation for those children who speak English as a second language.
- Ensuring that any additional support staff have the qualifications and experience appropriate to match the needs of the child and family, and that such staff are supportive of the school's philosophy.
- Ensuring that specialised medical and nutritional needs are met in a culturally appropriate way.
- Recognition of the special opportunities of the Montessori programme and prepared environment in all learning areas, appropriate also to those who show accelerated progress.
- Maintaining an emphasis on the individual interests and skills of each child and encouraging children to work independently and seek assistance only when needed.
- Encouraging children to work cooperatively and non-competitively, emphasising an appreciation of each child's individuality.
- Ensuring that the benefit of helping others is strongly conveyed to families, encouraging children to help one another.
- Maintaining a research library that is freely available to staff, parents and community as appropriate.

Relevant Legislation	Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Reg. 73-76, 168 Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 Work, Health and Safety Act 2011
Related to NQS QA	1.1, 2.1, 3.1
Related Policies	Inclusion/Cultural Diversity Anti-bias policy
Sources & Further Reading	Montessori Australia Foundation Department of Education Communities Association of Early Childhood.

POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
January 2022	Updated copy	2024