



Inclusion and Diversity Policy for Children's Services

Policy Statement

The YMCA of Canberra values the dignity and intrinsic worth of all people regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, belief or other difference. The YMCA's primary role is as a 'community developer', building strong people, families and communities. The YMCA aims to enhance connections, increase access, encourage social inclusion, and promote individual empowerment and participation in community life by improving people's holistic health and wellbeing. All YMCA Programs will create an environment that supports, reflects and promotes inclusive behaviours and practices. All children, families and customers will be treated equitably and are valued and included in all aspects of the YMCA.

The YMCA of Canberra is committed to promoting an inclusive community that values diversity. This policy has been developed to reflect this commitment and has drawn on the following documents:

- United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child
- YMCA of Canberra philosophy and values
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics, and the
- YMCA of Canberra Code of Conduct

Objectives

- YMCA Employees are asked to acknowledge, include and respect all families, children and community members regardless of their age, gender, culture, belief or ability.
- To encourage, from all employees, inclusive attitude and inclusive practices to support the participation of all community members.
- To ensure all children, families, educators and community members are treated with dignity and respect by being provided with opportunities that suit their individual, unique requirements.
- To uphold and promote the principles and values of social justice.
- To work towards removing barriers to full participation in community life

Actions

YMCA of Canberra will:

- Incorporate social inclusion, where possible, into all YMCA of Canberra and YMCA Business Unit strategic planning
- Use methods to enhance social inclusion will be considered in program and service development
- Offer opportunities to develop and conduct programs that address specific barriers to full participation in community life will be investigated and implemented where possible



- Actively promote volunteering and recognition of the contribution of volunteers
 - Promote environments in which people are treated and respected equally regardless of gender, age, socio-economic status, race, language, beliefs, additional needs, family structures or lifestyles.
 - Not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others.
 - Recognise and value the differences and similarities that exist between all people.
 - Work to create inclusive environments that embrace and value the diversity within the wider community.
 - Translate key documents into other languages if required and will utilise support agencies such as the Translating and Interpreting Service
 - Build effective relationships with and develop assets in all people by applying a developmental asset framework to programs and services
 - Be inclusive and respectful to the diverse financial capacities of families in temporary financial hardship by providing flexible payment options or auxiliary funded access to programs
 - Will promote positive attitudes towards diversity including
 - a. Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander heritage
 - b. Children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - c. Children and families who may be socially isolated or vulnerable
 - d. Children of all diverse abilities
- Will provide access to buildings and facilities that supports families and children of all strengths and abilities.
- Social Inclusion will be incorporated, into all YMCA of Canberra and YMCA Business Unit strategic planning.
- YMCA educators and staff will be provided with opportunities to undertake training to enhance their knowledge in the areas of diversity, anti-bias practices, social justice topics and inclusion.
- Ensure the resources and equipment provided and displayed in the YMCA Early Learning Services are authentic and respectful to individual cultures of families and the community.
- Will provide opportunities for employees to develop their cultural competence build strong community partnerships and develop their cultural knowledge.

YMCA educators and volunteers in Children's Services will:

- Respect the rights and diversity of each child.
- Use difference as a positive aspect of who we are, rather than something to avoid.

We embrace with pride, admiration and awe these great and ancient cultures we are truly blessed to have among us, cultures that provide a



unique, uninterrupted human thread linking our Australian continent to the most ancient prehistory of our planet. Rudd, 2008 (Belonging, Being & Becoming, Educators Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2010, Chapter 7 -The journey for educators, Growing competence in working with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures p24)

- View all children as capable and competent with many diverse strengths and abilities which contribute to their learning.
- Support children in developing the knowledge and understanding of diversity by being positive role models.
- Provide access to specialized equipment and resources to support individual children's diverse requirements.
- Provide access to appropriate Inclusion Support Services as requested / required.
- Provide all children with opportunities and experiences to develop meaningful social relationships and lifelong skills.
- Demonstrate respect and understanding for family's diverse cultural values, beliefs and child rearing practices.
- Be sensitive to cultural differences in body language, behaviour, attitudes, communication styles and practices related to cultural beliefs.
- Provide an environment and experiences that nurture, celebrate and reinforce children's culture and supports the development of their cultural identity.
- Act ethically and with professionalism when addressing diversity without bias.
- YMCA educators will be aware of the way in which they treat individuals in regard to language, attitudes, assumptions and expectations
- YMCA educators will include experiences in their curriculum which are not based on gender stereotypes
- Use resource materials that challenge traditional gender stereotypes and enhance children's understanding and acceptance towards diversity.
- Support children and families in maintaining the language of the home.
- Foster positive behaviours by providing an environment that is warm and welcoming to children and families developing a sense of belonging.
- Respond to children's play when they recognise unfair behaviours.
- Liaise and network with health professionals, community support and advocate groups as required.
- Role model behaviour and language that describes emotions, feelings, equity and fairness.
- Collaborate with the child, families and support services to support the child and families unique requirements.

Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences.

Belonging, Being & Becoming



Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2010

- In conjunction with relevant YMCA staff determine the most appropriate means of achieving inclusion in program/service for the customer and implement strategies
- If the YMCA of Canberra is not able to include a person in a program or service for any reason, we will endeavour to direct them to another appropriate service or program provider in the community.
- YMCA staff will be provided with opportunities to undertake training to enhance their skills in the areas of Inclusion and Integration.
- YMCA staff shall accept and value every person regardless of race, cultural background, religion, gender, or ability
- YMCA staff will be aware of the way in which they treat individuals in regard to language, attitudes, assumptions and expectations
- YMCA program staff will include activities that are not based on gender stereotypes and will utilize resource materials that challenge traditional gender stereotypes
- YMCA staff will use non-bias language and within YMCA Child and Family Services staff will encourage children to use non-bias language, and treat each other with respect regardless of gender, ethnicity, ability or other difference

Assisting People with Additional Needs

- Identify program/ service the customer wishes to participate in
- Arrange meeting between relevant YMCA staff and customer plus family members/ carers and any other relevant parties eg. teachers, support workers etc to discuss needs
- Identify exact nature of additional needs; support worker, modified equipment, transport, financial assistance, modified program. Within YMCA Child and Family Services the YMCA Child and Family Services Social Inclusion Assessment form can be used.
- Determine if any current support services available to community can be utilised to facilitate access to the program/service and liaise as appropriate
- Liaise with health and allied health professionals and community support and advocate groups as required
- In conjunction with relevant YMCA staff determine the most appropriate means of achieving inclusion in program/service for the customer and implement
- If the YMCA of Canberra is not able to include a person in a program or service for any reason, we will endeavour to direct them to another service or program provider in the community.



Inclusion Support Resources: (the resources listed below are not exclusive)

- Childcare Benefit Registration (Financial assistance in approved care services for 0-12 year olds)
- Office for Children Youth and Family Support; Children's Policy and Regulation Unit – funding and training support
- Special Needs Subsidy Scheme (SNSS) funding support
- Carers Association ACT
- YMCA of Canberra – Social Inclusion funding

Related Policies and Procedures:

YMCA Curriculum Policy
Equal opportunity for women in the workforce
YMCA Employee code of conduct

Standards/ Legislation:

Education and Care Services National Law Act, 2012
Educational and Care Services National Regulations, 2011

National Quality Standards:

Part 4.1 Educational Program and Practice

Standard 1.1 An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child's learning and development

Element 1.1.2 - Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interest are the foundation of the program

Part 4.3 Physical Environment

Standard 3.1 – The design and location of the premises are appropriate for the operation of a service.

Element 3.1.3 – Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use, and interaction between indoor and outdoor space.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Racial Discrimination Act 1975
Sex Discrimination Act 1984
Age Discrimination Act 2004
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)

References:

YMCA CANBERRA



UNICEF – fact sheet / summary of the rights of a child.

www.unicef.org.au ; sourced Jan, 2012

NCAC Policy Guide - 2008; sourced Jan, 2012

Early Childhood Australia, a voice for young children - Code of Ethics

www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

Educators Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia / Belonging, Being & Becoming

Chapter 6; Cultural Competence pg 21, 21, 23 – sourced Jan, 2012