

Children with additional needs



Fact Sheet

What do we mean by additional needs?

The term *additional needs* indicates when a child has a condition or a disability that requires extra support.

Additional needs can include children with: medical conditions (such as allergies), learning and developmental delays (autism), physical or intellectual disabilities, mental health issues (anxiety), welfare issues (family violence), challenging life circumstances (refugee children) or cultural factors (language barriers).

Why is it important?

All children will benefit from experiencing social inclusion and developing positive relationships with others, and this is vitally important for children with additional needs. Educators can create caring and supportive environments which cater to different temperaments and learning styles; acknowledging each person's strengths and interests; and providing constructive but caring guidance when needed.

As educators, being aware of the different challenges and stresses these children may be facing can prevent further difficulties that can affect the child and their family, and which may impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

What can educators do?

There are a range of strategies educators can use to support children with additional needs and promote social inclusion.

Developing relationships with the local inclusion support agencies, who can provide specialist resources, equipment and provide additional support.

When working with children with additional needs, educators can practically assist by:

- Embracing diversity, culture and difference;
- Promoting and modelling attitudes of respect and acceptance;

- Developing a plan for supporting the child's additional needs and their wellbeing;
- Advocating on behalf of the child if you think their additional needs are not being met;
- Adapting games and activities to promote inclusiveness, and include one-on-one or small group activities;
- Discovering what the child's interests and abilities are to then incorporate into your planning;
- Helping the child gain a sense of belonging, and develop friendships; and
- Working with other professionals and educators to support the child.

Further Information

Owens, A. (2007) Supporting children with additional needs. Extract from NCAC newsletter *Putting Children First*, (23), 6-8.

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