GENDER EQUITY POLICY

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

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

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

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 3A	Paramount consideration
S. 162B	Child safety training
S.166A	Offence to subject child to inappropriate conduct Offences relating to inappropriate conduct
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
157	Access for parents
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures are to be followed

RELATED LEGISLATION

Privacy Act 1988 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 Sex Discrimination Act 1984

RELATED POLICIES

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

PURPOSE

The safety, dignity, rights and best interests of the child are the paramount consideration in promoting gender equity and inclusive practices in all areas of Service operations.

This policy outlines how our Service promotes equitable opportunities and challenges gender stereotypes within the broader Anti-Bias and inclusion framework. This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Anti-Bias and Inclusion Policy*, which outlines broader legislative obligations relating to discrimination and inclusion.

SCOPE

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

IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

- be prepared to challenge sexist attitudes and behaviours
- ensure that you protect the child or adult who has been treated unfairly
- explain what you think is unfair about their attitudes and behaviours and model anti-sexist attitudes and behaviours
- correct any incorrect and sexist assumptions a child has about gender
- plan a strategy for how to deal with a similar situation in the future.

Dr Red Ruby Scarlet (Ed.). 2018

DEFINITIONS

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

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

Gender equality is the outcome reached through gender equity. It is the equal valuing by the society of the similarities and differences between women and men, and the varying roles that they play. (not covered in this policy)

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

(refer to Anti-bias and Inclusion Policy)

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

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

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

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

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

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- ensure obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations are met
- ensure educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and associated procedure and new employees are provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction process
- ensure families are informed about the Service's gender equity approach and how it is implemented to support positive outcomes for all children
- promote a gender equitable and inclusive environment
- provide a positive, inclusive, respectful and safe environment for LGBTIQA+ parented families
- ensure all staff have access to professional development activities- promote inclusivity and representing all families in the community including LGBTIQA+ families
- engage staff in reflective practice about their own biases about gender
- ensure educators and staff understand their obligations to prevent gender-based discrimination
- ensure any allegation of discriminatory or gender-based inappropriate conduct will be reported to the nominated supervisor immediately and managed in accordance with the *Child Safe Environment and Code of Conduct Policy*

EDUCATORS WILL:

- provide equitable opportunities for all children regardless of gender
- actively challenge gender stereotypes in play, language and expectations
- be mindful and respectful of how activities and experiences provided may impact on the expectations, interests, and behaviours of all genders
- use inclusive and respectful language when referring to children and families
- respect and protect the privacy and confidentiality of all children and families in relation to gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation

- only share information regarding a child's or family's gender identity or family composition where authorised, legally required or necessary to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing
- respond sensitively and respectfully to disclosures made by children and families
- recognise that unauthorised disclosure of a child's or family's personal information may compromise their safety and wellbeing and may constitute inappropriate conduct
- provide a stimulating learning environment in which all children are equally encouraged to explore a full range of experiences, emotions and interests free from gender stereotypes
- actively discourage the identification of skills, behaviours or feelings as specific to 'boys' and 'girls'
- monitor and reflect on their language, attitudes, and assumptions and practices to ensure they promote gender equity and challenge bias
- model positive, inclusive behaviours and avoid reinforcing traditional gender roles
- regularly review curriculum resources, books, materials and images to ensure they reflect gender diversity, non-stereotypical representations and diverse family structures
- support children to explore and express their gender identities and understandings within a safe and respectful environment.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Gender Equity Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management, and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
Australian Human Rights Commission (2015) *Supporting young children's rights* Statement of Intent (2105-2018)
Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. V2.0.*
Australian Government. Australian Institute of Families Studies. (2022). *LGBTIQA+ glossary of common terms*.
Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)
Darebin City Council *Creating Gender Equity in the Early Years: A resource for Local Government*
Early Childhood Australia (2016). *Code of Ethics.*
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Education and Care Services National Regulations (NSW) (2025) (For NSW services only)
Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 (WA Services only)
Western Australia Legislation Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012 (WA Services only)
Women's Health East (2017). *No Limitations. Breaking down gender stereotypes in the early years. A resource guide for early years educators. https://whe.org.au/what-we-do/gender-equity-for-health-outcomes/no-limitations-gender-stereotypes-early-years/*

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	[NAME] Amy Flockhart	[POSITION] office admin	[DATE] 09/07/2026
POLICY REVIEWED	APRIL 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	APRIL 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V16.04.26		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy review • condensed some dot points to avoid repetition of inclusive curriculum expectations already included in *Anti-Bias and Inclusion Policy* • sources checked for currency and updated as required		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		
APRIL 2025	• annual policy maintenance • moved definitions to beginning of policy • sources checked and updated as required		