POLICY
Early Childhood Support
Required for Parent Folder- Yes

1. Purpose / Objective

This policy outlines the manner in which AEIOU Foundation (AEIOU) provides early childhood supports and responds to the individual needs of the children and families utilising our services.

2. Application/Scope

This policy applies to the AEIOU Foundation (AEIOU) Board of Directors and sub committees, workers and volunteers, students, contractors, consultants and all AEIOU clients. This policy applies to all locations that AEIOU operates.

3. Policy Statement

AEIOU provides early childhood support services that provide opportunities for children with autism to achieve their goals and develop functional skills that enable them to participate meaningfully and be included in everyday activities with their peers, family and community life. We work with children and their families to achieve agreed goals for the child in a manner that maintains their dignity and human rights of the child. To enable us to achieve this vision, we ensure our services are provided in a safe environment and that legislative requirements are met, including the management and reporting risk of harm to children to relevant authorities.

Goals that consider the needs and priorities of the child, their family and culture, and the natural environment are developed collaboratively with the family and relevant others, with a focus on their strengths and abilities to build capacity that supports the child's learning and development.

Plans are developed and the progress of the child is monitored and reviewed regularly with feedback from the child, and the family. Our professional and highly qualified interdisciplinary team of allied health practitioners; occupational therapists, speech pathologists, psychologists, and NDIS approved behaviour support practitioners, and our qualified early learning educators and dedicated research team, all work to develop and implement a program of supports that is based on sound evidence-based research , with informed practice and approaches to behaviour support, including positive behaviour support that is outcome and goal-focused around the child and family.

AEIOU believes that family involvement helps build a strong partnership of trust and mutual respect, while valuing each child's uniqueness and family unit. Family involvement promotes and informs:

- parents as actively informed decision-makers in the care, education and transition of their child
- knowledge and skills to support the child's learning and development
- building family confidence around routines and activities
- inclusiveness and enables meaningful participation in both family and community life
- contributions and suggestions to individual and general program planning
- continuous improvement in all areas of service provision
- parent education, training and support.

4.   Requirements for Performance

4.1   Principles

AEIOU believes all children:

- can learn and have the right to an education
- benefit from programs based on individual needs
- learn using different learning styles and at different rates
- are individuals, with differing personalities, needs, wants, interests and levels of ability and should be encouraged to express themselves and their opinions
- require flexible routines in their daily program to cater for their individual needs
- need to foster independence and develop self-confidence
- should receive early intervention and access to appropriate assessment, where applicable
- are entitled to a balanced program that bridges the gap between the home, AEIOU and community
- benefit from families, staff and collaborating providers working together
- should have educators who interact with them in a warm manner that is responsive to their needs.

4.2   Identifying Individual Strengths, Needs, Goals, and Aspirations

AEIOU uses flexible and inclusive methods to identify the individual strengths, needs, goals, priorities and aspirations of all children and families using our services through:

- a relaxed and happy atmosphere for the children is provided
- our educators are knowledgeable in communication strategies and nonverbal cues of children
- our educators support children to build secure attachments with one and then many educators
- our educators awareness that children can experience a form of separation anxiety when away from their families (our educators work with the family to make the child feel safe and happy)
- rosters planned in a way that ensures continuity of care for children
- our educators participate in children's play that use children's cues to guide their level and type of involvement and assistance, while a positive approach is maintained towards to children at all times
- our educators model reason, prediction and reflection processes and language when possible
- our educators collaborate with children about routines and experiences
- our educators use techniques such as sign language and other resources and tools to support children with additional needs
- our educators engage in give and take communication interactions initiated by children
- our educators and coordinators use information from their observed interactions with children to extend and challenge the children's thinking, learning and development
- our educators frequently talk with families to understand non-verbal forms of communication used by their children to convey messages such as hunger, needing the toilet, tiredness and emotions
- relaxed and unhurried mealtimes where educators take the time to sit and interact with children
- information gathered from families during enrolment and intake meetings to provide support for children during the settling in process
- instill in each child a sense of self identity, dignity and tolerance for all people
- children encouraged to become independent and actively involved with their peers
- encourage children to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride

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- support children to develop communication skills through the consistent implementation of targeted and individualised best-practice language stimulation and therapy techniques, including a variety of Alternative Augmentative Communication Systems (AAC)
- individualised communication programmes based on comprehensive formal and informal assessment, and modifications based on periodic reviews of progress
- facilitate children's understanding through the provision of visual supports such as visual timetables.

Regular staff meetings are also held to review the delivery of services to each individual, share best practises, and train staff members in new methods and procedures.

4.3   External Visits

AEIOU recognises that at times – as part of our family centred outlook – it may be important to provide service or support to a family outside of the centre-based environment. A staff member or family representative may indicate a need for a home visit, school transition visit or community support experience. Typically, reasons for this may include training of a specific strategy within the context of the home environment (e.g. toileting or mealtimes), assistance with generalising skills or assistance with access to community experiences (as related to their NDIS plan).

AEIOU may be able to offer support to families through:

- home visits
- school transition visits
- telephone and email support as needed.

Refer to **the External Visits Procedure** for further details.

4.4   Positive Behaviour Support

AEIOU is committed to ensure that an understanding of behaviour as a form of communication drives the creation and implementation of strategies and techniques for guiding behaviour, and reflects a centre's commitment to establish a supportive and safe leaning environment for all children.

AEIOU promotes a positive approach to manage behaviour of all children. We seek to help children to:

- develop safe and appropriate ways to interact with others
- develop tools to problem solve e.g. to process feelings
- explore alternative solutions
- respect the rights and property of others, and
- become responsive, co-operative participants in the program.

AEIOU staff members recognise that challenging behaviour:

- always serves a purpose
- can be the result of limited communication/language skills
- can be the result of sensory issues/overload
- requires patience, understanding and empathy
- requires commitment to seek constructive solutions and alternatives
- must be functionally assessed in order to understand and reduce
- may require complex and/or prolonged problem-solving.

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Behaviour support strategies and techniques include:

- reinforcement
- prompting
- prompt fading
- modelling
- 1:1 direct instruction
- visual supports.

A functional approach to challenging behaviours is outlined within the **Behaviour Support and Restrictive Practice Procedure, Curriculum Guidelines, Behaviour Support Guidelines and Transdisciplinary Support Guidelines.**

Physical contact between staff and children will occur in instances where children require:

- comfort when distressed
- direction
- changing when wet/soiled
- prompting (for example, hand leading)
- reinforcement (for example, hugs and tickles)
- regulated restrictive practices as detailed in **Behaviour Support and Restrictive Practice Procedure**

Corporal/physical punishment is never used in our service.

4.5   Augmentative alternative communication

In order to encourage communication between children and their peers, educator and carers:

- where assessed as necessary, our service supports the introduction and implementation of a functional communication system
- our service supports the use of functional communication systems across the school and home setting
- when a child with ASD transitions from a low-tech device (e.g. PECS) to a high-tech device (proloquo2go on the iPad) a **Transition From Low Tech to High Tech AAC Device Form** must be completed.

4.6   Group Relationships

In order to encourage respectful and positive relationships between children, their peers and educators:

- our services will encourage children to participate in interactions with their peers, respond positively to ideas, negotiate roles and relationships, contribute to shared play and develop friendships
- our educators will engage children in ongoing group projects that involve planning, problem solving and shared decision making
- our educators will model strategies for children to initiate interactions and participate in group play and social activities and assist them when they have trouble understanding or communicating with each other
- our educators will promote a sense of community in the service

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- our services will coordinate the staffing and grouping arrangements to support positive relationships between children
- our educators will support and promote children's interpersonal relationships and support the inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and capabilities in group play, projects and experiences
- our educators will learn about children's shared interests and will use this information to plan further experiences that provide collaborative learning opportunities
- our educators will pre-empt potential conflicts or challenging behaviours by monitoring children's play and supporting interactions where there is conflict
- our services will ensure that the program and routines of the service will include regular opportunities for children to engage in social play and group experiences.

4.7 Respecting Diversity

AEIOU formulates service delivery that respects and values the individual regardless of identity, gender, sexuality, culture, age and religious beliefs through:

- parents encouraged to share knowledge of their children and participate in AEIOU activities and decisions
- parents welcomed and identified as valued members in our community
- recognising individual families have the right to raise their children in ways that reflect their diverse backgrounds
- staff and group arrangements within the service support the development of trusted relationships between educators and children to allow them to feel secure in the service
- our educators use their interactions with children to support the maintenance of home languages and learning English as an additional language
- our nominated supervisor, educators and coordinators continue to learn about histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families using the service
- our educators building relationships with families to encourage links between home, school and the community
- our service promotes and values cultural diversity and equity for all children, families and educators from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- our service encourages a positive self-concept for each child and adult in the group by exploring the cultural backgrounds of each family and child
- our service increases the knowledge and understanding each child has about his or her own cultural ethnic heritage in partnership with their family, educators, community and other children in the service
- educators explore family compositions, customs and lifestyles of children and families at the service
- educators avoid common stereotypes and recognise children's individual differences
- educators acknowledge that all children can learn and that differences in lifestyles and languages do not mean ignorance
- educators active involvement with children, show respect, share ideas and experiences and ask questions
- work with families to encourage positive attitudes to diversity and an anti-bias ethos
- educators ensure that casual workers or visitors to the service are aware of these practices and respectful of these values

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- help children to develop ease with, and have a respect for, physical, racial, religious and cultural differences.

4.8   Service Delivery, Monitoring, Review, and Reassessment

AEIOU offers a highly supportive teaching and learning environment, with predictability and routine. We ensure services to children and families are delivered, monitored, evaluated and routinely reviewed.

- all children are assessed on intake, 12 monthly and on exit
- all children have an individual plan working document which comprises of goals identified in their NDIS plan, individual goal updates, parent training and a significant changes section
- team members frequently collect data and conduct observations of children in order to update the child's NDIS goal progress, which is monitored and reviewed regularly
- NDIS goals, formal assessments, observation and curriculum assessments develop and inform goal driven planning.

Refer to **the Curriculum Guidelines, and the Transdisciplinary Support Guidelines.**

4.9   Partnerships and Collaborations

AEIOU creates partnerships and collaborates to enable the service to effectively work with community support networks, other organisations and government agencies. Close collaborative links with the family and other collaborating providers are established to coordinate the team around each child. (e.g. Research Advisory Group, Department of Education, Department of Communities Child Safety and Disability Services, Parent Connect, Autism Hub, medical practitioners, etc.). With the consent of the family, information, knowledge and skills are communicated and shared between the family, the provider, and other collaborating providers to facilitate their development and address the family's needs and priorities.

4.10 Communication and Decision Making

AEIOU considers the active engagement and involvement of the parents across the organisation as an important component of our services.

AEIOU uses a range of strategies to ensure communication and decision-making by children and their families is respected and reflected in goals set and in plans to achieve service delivery outcomes through:

- our educators support towards children to communicate or initiate conversations about their experiences inside and outside the service, what is happening around them, to express their ideas and feelings, to share humour with staff and to seek assistance as they take on new challenges and try to do things for themselves
- our educators responding sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and support them in sustained interactions based on their interests in a positive manner
- our educators talk with children in a two-sided manner where possible and encourage children to communicate their own opinions, ideas and support them to feel their ideas are valued
- have in place predictable personal-care routines that are enjoyable experiences and respond while children practice their verbal communication skills
- our routines, and planned or spontaneous experiences are organised to maximise opportunity for meaningful interactions between children and educators and children have equal opportunity to engage in one to one and small group interactions with educators
- our statement of philosophy and policy on interactions with children being visible

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- our service implements strategies to assist all children to develop a sense of belonging and confidence through positive interactions between the children and educators
- provision of Parent Forums.

4.11 Parent Forums

We hold Parent Forums regularly at each centre to provide opportunities for parents to contribute their feedback and suggestions. The purpose of a parent forum meeting is to:

- provide a forum to share information and offer suggestions regarding organisational decisions and directions
- establish networks and provide support to one another
- participate in decisions regarding program experiences, activities and resources
- provide feedback to improve service provision
- gather feedback about our policies and processes and any improvement opportunities
- encourage participation in fund raising activities / events.

The meetings are structured accordingly:

- non-hierarchical and relatively informal
- encourage participation from all parents
- attempt to have assigned roles including a President (Chairperson), Secretary and Fundraising Coordinator (the Centre Management Team will run these where formal role structures are unfilled)
- meet on-site once a term
- have a structured agenda which is displayed on the centre notice board a week prior to the meeting for people to add agenda items
- have minutes recorded that are available to all parents and kept on file at the centre.

4.12 Parent Fundraising

Parent Forums provide an opportunity to discuss fundraising options on behalf of a particular centre. The overall support of parents is beneficial to AEIOU and parents can work closely with the AEIOU Fundraising Committee and Fundraising Manager for maximum support and guidance.

For details see **Parent Fundraising Procedure.**

5   References / Information

5.1   Related Documents

Controlled documents related to this policy are accessed in from the master controlled documents system currently held in G:\Common\QA\AEIOU Policies Procedures Forms Manuals and migrated to the Mango platform.

Doc Number	Title
POL2.0	Service Provision Policy
PRO2.01	Service Access and Exit Procedure
PRO2.07	Service Fees, Financial Administration and Reporting
PRO3.01	Curriculum Guidelines Procedure
PRO3.02	External Visits Procedure

PRO3.04	Behaviour Support Guidelines
F3.04	Monitoring Behaviour Process and related Forms
PRO3.03	Behaviour Support Plans and Restrictive Practices
PRO3.05	Service Delivery Procedure
PRO3.01	Curriculum Guidelines
PRO3.06	Transdisciplinary Support Guidelines
PRO1.24	Parent Fundraising Procedure
F3.00E	Transition from low tech to high tech AAC

5.2   Legislation and Other Relevant Information

Key legislation and information to be aware of for further information and guidance.

Australian Consumer Law, the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 and related Regulations 2010
ACNC Act
Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)
Children's Protection Act 1999 (QLD)
Coroner's Act
Disability Services Act 2006 and Regulations 2006 (QLD)
Disability Services Act 1993 (SA)
Education and Care Standards National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations
Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA)
Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Regulations 2011 (SA)
Education and Care Services Act 2013 (QLD)
Education and Care Services Regulations 2013 (QLD)
Fair Work Act 2009
Human Rights Act (Qld)
NDIS Act 2013 – and Rules
NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018, and Explanatory Statement
NDIS (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018, and Explanatory Statement
NDIS (Restrictive Practices and Behaviour Support) Rules 2018, and Explanatory Statement
NDIS (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018, and Explanatory Statement
NDIS (Procedural fairness) Guidelines 2018
NDIS (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018, and Explanatory Statement
NDIS (Practice Standards – Worker Screening) Rules 2018
NDIS Quality Indicators Guidelines 2018
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Incident Management System Guidance
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Reportable Incidents Guidance
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Behaviour Support Competency Framework
NDIS Code of Conduct – Guidance for Workers
NDIS Code of Conduct – Guidance for Service Providers
Privacy Act 1988
Information Privacy Principles 1992 (SA)
Information Privacy Act (QLD)
Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations 2011 (QLD)
Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations 2012 (SA)
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child

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5.3   Quality Standards Map

NDIS Practice Standards - Quality Indicator

	Rights and Responsibilities
QI 6	**Person-centred Supports** (6.1, 6.2, 6.3) **Outcome:** Each participant accesses supports that promote, uphold and respect their legal and human rights and is enabled to exercise informed choice and control. The provision of supports promotes, upholds and respects individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision making.
QI 7	**Individual Values and beliefs** (7.1, 7.2) **Outcome:** Each participant accesses supports that respect their culture, diversity, values and beliefs.
QI 8	**Privacy and Dignity (**8.1, 8.2, 8.3) **Outcome:** Each participant accesses supports that respect and protect their dignity and right to privacy
QI 9	**Independence and Informed Choice** (9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5) **Outcome:** Each participant is supported by the provider to make informed choices, exercise control and maximise their independence relating to the supports provided.
QI 10	**Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination** (10.1, 10.2, 10.3) **Outcome:** Each participant accesses supports free from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination.
	Provision of Supports
QI 20	**Support Planning** (20.1, 20.2, 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6) **Outcome:** Each participant is actively involved in the development of their support plans. Support plans reflect the participant needs, requirements, preferences, strengths and goals, and are regularly reviewed.
QI 22	**Responsive Support Provision** (22.1, 22.2, 22.4) **Outcome:** Each participant accesses responsive, timely, competent and appropriate supports to meet their needs, desired outcomes and goals.
QI 23	Transition to or from the Provider (23.1, 23.2, 23.3) **Outcome:** Each participant experiences a planned and coordinated transition to or from the provider.
	Specialist Behaviour Support
QI 38	**Behaviour Support in the NDIS** (38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4, 38.5) **Outcome**: Each participant access behaviour support that is appropriate to their needs which incorporate evidence-informed practice and complies with relevant legislation and policy frameworks.
QI 39	**Restrictive Practices** (39.1, 39.2, 39.3, 39.4, 39.5, 39.6, 39.7, 39.8) **Outcome**: Each participant is only subject to a restrictive practice that meets any state and territory authorisation (however described) requirements and the relevant requirements and safeguards outlined in Commonwealth legislation and policy.
QI 40	**Functional Behaviour Assessments and Behaviour Support Plans** (40.1, 40.2, 40.3, 40.4, 40.5, 40.6) **Outcome**: Each participant's quality of life is maintained and improved by tailored, evidence-informed behaviour support plans that are responsive to their needs.
QI 41	**Supporting the Implementation of the Behaviour Support Plans** (41.1, 41.2, 41.3, 41.4, 41.5, 41.6, 41.7) **Outcome**: Each participant's behaviour support plan is implemented effectively to meet the participant's behaviour support needs.
QI 42	**Behaviour Support Plan Monitoring and Review** (42.1, 42.2, 42.3, 42.4, 42.5, 42.6) **Outcome**: Each participant has a current behaviour support plan that reflects their needs, improves their quality of life and supports their progress towards positive change. The plan progresses towards the reduction and elimination of restrictive practices, where these are in place for the participant.
QI 43	**Reportable Incidents involving the Use of a Restrictive Practice** (43.1, 43.2) **Outcome**: Each participant that is subject to an emergency or unauthorised use of a restrictive practice has the use of that practice reported and reviewed.
QI 44	**Interim Behaviour Support Plans** (44.1, 44.2) **Outcome**: Each participant with an immediate need for a behaviour support plan receives an interim behaviour support plan which minimises the risk to participant and others.
	Implementing Behaviour Support Plans
QI 47	**Behaviour Support in the NDIS** (47.1, 47.2, 47.3) **Outcome**: Each participant accesses behaviour support that is appropriate to their needs which incorporate evidence informed practice and complies with relevant legislation and policy frameworks.
QI 48	**Regulated Restrictive Practice** (48.1, 48.2, 48.3, 48.4, 48.5)

QI 49	**Outcome**: Each participant is only subject to a regulated restrictive practice that meets any state and territory authorisation (however described) requirements and the relevant requirements and safeguards outlined in Commonwealth legislation and policy.
QI 50	**Supporting the Assessment and Development of Behaviour Support Plans** (49.1, 49.2, 49.3, 49.4) **Outcome**: Each participant's quality of life is maintained and improved by tailored, evidence-informed behaviour support plans that are responsive to their needs.
QI 51	**Behaviour Support Plan Implementation** (50.1, 50.2, 50.3, 50.4, 50.5, 50.6, 50.7) **Outcome**: Each participant's behaviour support plan is implemented effectively to meet the participant's behaviour support needs.
QI 52	**Monitoring and Reporting the Use of Regulated Restrictive Practices** (51.1, 51.2, 51.3) **Outcome**: Each participant is only subject to a restrictive practice that is reported to the Commission.
QI 53	**Behaviour Support Plan Review** (52.1 52.2, 52.3, 52.4) **Outcome**: Each participant has a current behaviour support plan that reflects their needs, and works towards improving their quality of life, reducing behaviours of concern, and reducing and eliminating the use of restrictive practices.
QI 54	**Reportable Incidents involving the Use of Restrictive Practices** (53.1, 53.2, 53.3, 53.4, 53.5, 53.6, 53.7) **Outcome**: Each participant that is subject to an emergency or unauthorised use of a restrictive practice has the use of that practice reported and reviewed.
QI 56	**Interim Behaviour Support Plans** (54.1, 54.2, 54.3) **Outcome**: Each participant with an immediate need for a behaviour support plan receives an interim behaviour support plan based on evidence-informed practice, which minimises risk to the participant and others. **Early Childhood Supports**
QI 57	**The Child** (56.1, 56.2, 56.3, 56.4) **Outcome**: Each child participant accesses supports that promote and respect their legal and human rights, support their development of functional skills, and enable them to participate meaningfully and be included in everyday activities with their peers.
QI 58	**The Family** (57.1, 57.2, 57.3, 57.4, 57.5, 57.6, 57.7, 57.8) **Outcome**: Each family receives family-centred supports that are culturally inclusive, responsive, and focus on their strengths.
QI 59	**Inclusion** (58.1, 58.2, 58.3, 58.4) **Outcome**: Each participant accesses supports that engage their natural environments and enable inclusive and meaningful participation in their family and community life.
QI 60	**Collaboration** (59.1, 59.2, 59.3, 59.4) **Outcome**: Each participant receives coordinated supports from a collaborative team comprising their family, the provider and other relevant providers, to facilitate their development and address the family's needs and priorities.
QI 61	**Capacity Building** (60.1, 60.2, 60.3, 60.4, 60.5) **Outcome**: Each participant receives supports that build knowledge, skills and abilities of the family and other collaborating providers in order to support the child's learning and development.
QI 62	**Evidence-Informed Practice** (61.1, 61.2, 61.3) **Outcome**: Each participant receives evidence-informed supports from providers with quality standards and validated practice. **Outcome Based Approach** (62.1, 62.2, 62.3, 62.4, 62.5, 62.6) **Outcome**: Each participant receives supports that are outcome-based and goal focused.

6   Document Management and Review

The organisation shall review, amend and/or update this document from time to time. Document reviews are scheduled in accordance with document management and Quality Management System Policy and Continual Improvement processes.

6.1   Document Ownership and Review

Approver	Finance and Risk Committee
Document owner	General Manager

Content owner	Executive Management Team, Head of Service Delivery, Head of Clinical Delivery
Contributor/s	Executive Management Team, Risk and Compliance Officer, Centre Management
Metadata	Early childhood support behaviour

6.2   Document History

Version	Revision detail / section	Date of issue
1	New – replaces Responding to Individual Need Policy	23/08/2019
2	Updated Qld and SA legislation – Education and Care Services Act 2013 and related regulations 2013 QLD, and Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Regulations 2011 (SA).	30/10/2019