

{Embrace}

Spring 2025 | Your inclusion support magazine

Fostering
respectful
relationships



Dress-ups that
celebrate diversity



VICTORIAN
INCLUSION
AGENCY

One For All

{ Acknowledgement of Country }

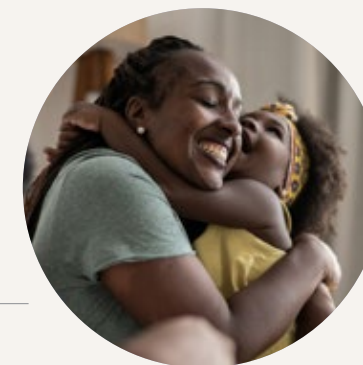


The Victorian Inclusion Agency acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this nation and the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work. We recognise their continuing connection to culture, land, water and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge the strength of family connection and kinship within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their ongoing dedication to educating and caring for children. Sovereignty of these lands was never ceded.

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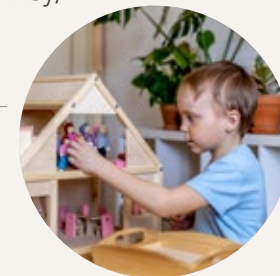
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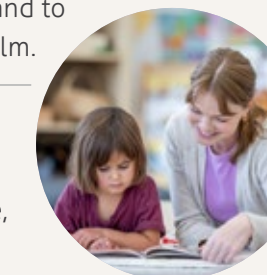
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Contributors

We would like to thank the following people for their contribution to this edition of *Embrace*:

Samantha Allemann and Laura Boehm – Editors, Danae de Kretser, Emma Keft, Samantha Panagiotopoulos, Aarti Sharma, Tanya Howard, Whitney Jane, Reannon May, Michelle Lester.



How Acacia Fitzroy Crèche embraces CALD inclusion



Director Deniz Dilruba
with assistant director
Emilia Wainggai

Acacia Fitzroy Crèche is renowned for their culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) practices. Inclusion Professional Laura Carolan chats with Director

Deniz Dilruba to learn how this centre achieves inclusion. Thanks to Inclusion Professional Jodie Signorino for her assistance with this story.

Laura Carolan: *Can you tell our readers a little bit about you?*

Deniz Dilruba: I've worked at Acacia Fitzroy for over 20 years and been the Director for 10 years. I was born to immigrant parents and grew up on the Atherton Gardens Estate [Fitzroy]. My background, qualifications and work experience has led to my philosophy of 'make life easier for those who are new to our country to better understand our systems.'

Laura: *Acacia Fitzroy's diversity sees a high number of families attending with diverse backgrounds, including English as an additional language, refugees and asylum seekers. Tell me about your engagement strategies and what advice you'd give other directors?*

Deniz: Start by making sure your service is visible in the local community. I actively seek out the vulnerable in our community by visiting churches or places of faith, as often this is where asylum seekers and refugees turn to for support and connection. I also attend local networking opportunities such as Connecting Fitzroy, which enables me to get to know programs in our area and connect families to resources.

Community connectedness is vital to understanding the needs of your service's community, and word of mouth is powerful when connecting.

We host events that encourage families to come to us, which provides us opportunities to further develop and strengthen relationships, and of course, encourage families to enrol their children in early learning programs.

Laura: *How do you implement inclusion at Acacia Fitzroy?*

Deniz: I start by making myself available to families at pick up and drop off, taking every and any opportunity to sit, talk and build relationships. I listen and build trust.

Many of our families are new to English, which we overcome with verbal communication and translated documents, including visuals. We assist families by sitting with them to complete documentation so they feel comfortable, engaged and included.

We employ the strategy 'Observe, Watch and Listen' to identify what is important to them and make every effort to recognise and understand their child-rearing practices and preferences. We've experienced families

that have come from a place where fresh drinking water and food was not always available.

We continually seek and ask families questions, and we encourage their cultural input to inform the program. We are committed to recruiting and employing educators from the local community and currently have educators that speak Arabic, Somali, Oromo, Chinese and Vietnamese.

Our orientation into the centre is slowly paced which helps us and families get to know each other and establish trust. We encourage families to stay in the program with their child so they can watch, listen and observe their child. Allowing families to remain in the program is particularly important to refugees and asylum seekers, as we recognise the difficulties a relocation can have on families.

Laura: *What would you say to new directors wanting to build on their inclusive practices and support educators to be more culturally responsive?*

Deniz: Body language and behaviours can indicate a lot about a person. Some families arrive with a hard or vulnerable edge; we must adjust how we communicate with them, empathising [with] what they may have experienced. By getting to know your community and understanding their needs, this will give you insight into the families attending your service.



Continued on next page



It is your role as a leader to make these connections, show respect and support children and families.

It is important to remember vulnerability is not just associated with poor socio-economic backgrounds, but also with educated professionals who have recently come to Australia following displacement. I try to see each parent for the individual they are and encourage them to also become a part of the community.

Deniz: Working with our Inclusion Professional, Laura, has demonstrated how feeling culturally safe is vital for inclusion. I feel culturally safe with Laura – she always makes me feel I can be open and honest, the same way I make every effort to make the families and children of Acacia Fitzroy feel.



Access our free resources

You can easily access our CALD-specific resources, including articles, checklists, posters and exercises on viac.com.au/resources/cald

Acacia Fitzroy Crèche embraces culture by:

- Being available at pick up and drop off for conversations with families
- Seeing families as individuals with differences within their religious and cultural contexts
- Having books and resources that represent all families in the service and read these in their home language
- Encouraging families to spend time with the educators, sharing their unique culture in a way they feel safe doing
- Asking families what events are important to them and how they want these to be acknowledged
- Accessing resources available to the centre, such as the VIA website, interpreters and using visual cues
- Reading body language, being open and honest
- Adjusting practices to assist families e.g. if families don't have an email address, printing out information
- Translating welcome and enrolment letters as well as information about how to access CCS
- Being seen and building trust within the community and with elders
- Surveying staff to ensure they understand the families and their cultures
- Organising professional development with educators about what is happening within the community and how they can connect with families
- Empowering educators so they are knowledgeable about family cultures and able to represent those cultures within the program.



Finish this sentence...

We invited Inclusion Professional Reannon May to ‘finish the sentence’ and tell us what drives her passion for inclusion, which tools she loves and what she does in her spare time.

I’m passionate about inclusion because...

Everyone deserves to feel safe, valued and participate in environments and activities of their choice, while being surrounded by people that celebrate them for who they are.

A rewarding moment in my work was...

Being invited to participate in National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day events at a regional Multifunctional Aboriginal Children’s Services (MACS) centre. Sharing in celebrations, conversations, activities and meals together was inspiring, and I’m thankful for the experience, memories and relationships created during these events.

My favourite tool for educators to support inclusion is...

Collaborative critical reflection – encouraging educators to open dialogue and invite others in on their reflections creates opportunities for diverse perspectives and voices to be heard, practices and assumptions to be challenged, and more informed practices to be created. This then naturally leads to more inclusive practices being facilitated. I encourage educators to invite children, families, colleagues and the community in on their reflections.

In my experience, the most important factors for successful inclusion in education and care are...

Strong relationships with children, families and community! And acknowledging that inclusion is not achieved by looking through a singular lens or focusing on a singular practice. Inclusion is more of a kaleidoscope approach, meaning it requires multiple perspectives, resources and lenses to be facilitated.

The most fulfilling part of my job is...

Hearing updates from services about how they are facilitating inclusive practices and the positive outcomes they are achieving. Keep up the great work everyone!

A new resource, book or idea I’ve come across lately that has influenced my view on inclusion is...

The statement “communication should not be exclusive” by Emma Sullivan from The Unspoken Communication Project really shifted my perspective. It prompted me to reflect more deeply on what true inclusion looks like, especially in terms of communication. Since then, I’ve been exploring how we can create environments where everyone is able to communicate, understand and meaningfully contribute, regardless of their communication needs or abilities.

On the weekend you’ll find me...

With my children playing outside, going on puddle-hunting adventures, riding bikes, enjoying slower mornings filled with pancakes and all the toppings, and most importantly, having fun together.



Fostering respectful relationships in education and care settings

BY RACHAEL BYE
Early Childhood Resource Officer,
Darebin Council

In early childhood education, we have a rare and powerful opportunity to shape how children see themselves, each other and the world.

Before school even begins, children are already forming beliefs about gender, fairness and respect. These early ideas – picked up through what they see, hear and experience – become the foundation for how they treat others, handle conflict and value diversity.

What do we mean by respectful relationships?

This isn't about teaching young children about adult relationships. It's about building the social, emotional and thinking skills that underpin equality, empathy and respect. It means helping children see all genders and all ways of being as equally capable, valued and respected, and encouraging kindness, cooperation and problem-solving.

It also involves questioning stereotypes and unfair treatment, including challenging the idea that there are certain ways to 'be' a boy or girl, and celebrating the many ways people express themselves.

It means showing that all feelings are normal for everyone, no matter their gender.

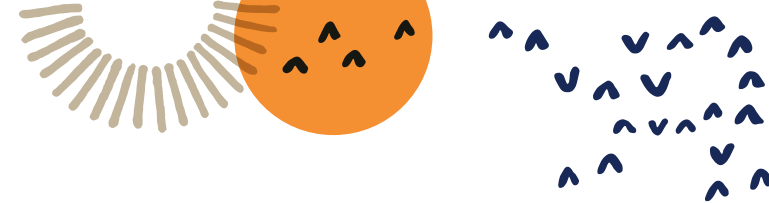
Research such as Our Watch's *Change the Story* shows that gender inequality is a key driver of violence, so promoting fairness and respect is a practical step toward prevention.

Starting the conversation early

By preschool age, children are already noticing patterns, such as who does which jobs, who gets to lead, and who is praised for being quiet or active. Left unchallenged, these messages can become lifelong beliefs.

When we address them early, children become more open-minded and comfortable with the full range of human emotions and are better equipped to form respectful friendships. They learn there's no single 'right' way to be a boy, a girl, or any gender – freeing everyone to explore who they are.

The Victorian Department of Education's *Respectful Relationships* resources highlight that skills like respect, communication and fairness are protective factors that help children navigate life with confidence.



Across the sector, the message is consistent – that respectful relationships education isn't an add-on.

It's about weaving equality, inclusion and respect into the everyday, from how we greet children, set up our spaces, respond when stereotypes appear, and in the stories we choose to share.

Creating a safer, fairer society can feel like a daunting task. But in early childhood education and care, we have a hopeful starting point – helping children form their very first understandings of fairness, respect and kindness. The ripple effect of those early lessons will carry far beyond the walls where learning begins.



Need help embedding respectful relationships in your service? Get in touch with your Inclusion Professional for further support.



Tips on how to embed respectful relationships

Drawing on resources from the City of Darebin, City of Melbourne and others, here are some practical ways to embed respectful relationships in your service:

- Audit your environment and materials (Darebin's [Gender Equity in the Early Years page](#) is a great resource for this).
- Challenge stereotypes in the teachable moments.
- Avoid directing children to certain activities based on gender.
- Use materials as discussion prompts – for instance, a book titled *Baking for Girls* sparked a lively discussion about who cooks at home, whether colours belong to certain genders and how we can all enjoy baking.
- Explore stories that challenge norms – check out Darebin's Gender equity in the early years page for [a list of brilliant books](#).
- Model respectful behaviour by showing what active listening can look like, acknowledging feelings and using kind language. When conflict happens, guide children to explain their feelings and work toward a fair solution.
- Reflect diverse family structures, cultures, abilities and gender identities in everyday curriculum.
- Share with parents why respectful relationships and gender equity are part of your program, and offer practical tips (like the ones shared here).





Dress-ups that celebrate diversity

Children can engage in rich dramatic play using only their imagination, but we know the dress-up corner is a hit for a reason! When they have access to a diverse range of costumes and accessories, they can embody characters, create scenarios, and develop narratives that explore different identities and ways of being in their play.

Could your dress-ups unintentionally reinforce stereotypes related to culture, disability, or gender?

Follow these five simple steps to find out and explore ways to diversify dramatic play at your service.



>>> Dive deeper:
Community Early Learning Australia (2024), *The ethics of dress-up: Balancing parental authority and child autonomy*.
Hope (2016), *Hair straighteners in the home corner*.
State Government of Victoria (2023), *Sociodramatic play (interacting with others)*.



Step 1
Divide your dress-ups into those with human and non-human characteristics.

Step 2
Split those with non-human characteristics into themes (animals, mythical creatures, vehicles etc.)

Step 3
Group your dress-ups that have human characteristics by:

- Family and community life
- Fixed themes with specific roles
- Children's literature and pop culture
- Unfamiliar people and places
- Traditional/multicultural perspectives.

Step 4
For each of the groups from steps 2 and 3, reflect on:

- Cultural perspectives – thinking about First Nations Australians as well as cultural and linguistic diversity
- Adaptive costumes and accessories – such as rear access for children to dress while seated, and accessibility panels accommodating mobility or medical equipment
- Gender diversity – allowing for exploration of different identities, including those that may differ from societal binary stereotypes or assigned genders.

Step 5
Review your results!

- How did your costume department shape up?
- Are there any gaps?

Final reflection

- Do the dress-ups in your collection acknowledge the diversity of children and families in your community?
- Do any items represent hurtful or negative stereotypes?
- How might you shift the narrative when children's play is reinforcing the societal stereotypes that perpetuate inequality?

Need extra support?
Contact your Inclusion Professional to discuss specific examples of how these changes can be made in your service.

TAKE ACTION
Is it time to diversify your dress-ups? What could your first step be? Write it in the box now!



First steps on your Inclusion Support journey

BY KAREN YOUNG
Victorian Inclusion Agency,
Yooralla

While you're waiting to meet your Inclusion Professional, there are some steps you can take to get prepared. Here's a list of reflective questions to gather insights and clarify your needs ahead of time so you'll be ready to go.

1 Understand your service's inclusion framework

- Are you familiar with your service's philosophy and policies around inclusion, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) communities?
- How do these principles guide your practice?

2 Connect with internal supports

- Have you spoken with your Educational Leader, Inclusion Team or Regional Manager?
- Have you consulted other Room Leaders or educators who have worked with the child previously?
- Have staff meeting notes or reflective conversations highlighted concerns or ideas worth sharing?

3 Do some initial research

- Have you searched online, sought out educational resources or listened to relevant podcasts?
- Have you asked your colleagues or leaders for insights and ideas related to the challenges you're facing?

4 Reflect on strategies you've tried

- Which strategies have already been implemented and what were the results?
- Have you allowed time for these strategies to settle before changing course? Consistency is key – some approaches need a couple of weeks to take effect.

5 Explore professional learning

- Have you accessed any online courses or webinars related to inclusion or specific developmental needs?
- Visit www.viac.com.au/resources for a wide range of educator resources – you can filter by topic, type and category.

6 Draw on your past experiences

- Have you supported a child with additional needs before?
- If so, what strategies worked well in the past, and could they be relevant again in your current context?

7 Talk with families

- Have you had open, respectful discussions with the family about shared goals and concerns?
- Are you aligned in your expectations and strategies?

8 Review the child's information

- Have you read the enrolment form and any relevant documentation, such as NDIS plans, medical notes or allied health reports?
- Do you know who is part of the child's wider support network?



9 Seek handover information

- If the child transitioned from another room or service, did you receive a handover outlining their interests, strengths and previous strategies?
- If not, can you follow up to get one?

10 Consider state-funded supports

- If the child participates in a funded kindergarten program, have you connected with the Preschool Field Officer, Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) or School Readiness Funding resources?
- Are these supports being used in a way that complements your inclusion planning?



TIP: Make notes on all these areas before your meeting. Your Inclusion Professional will use this information to help develop a Strategic Inclusion Plan tailored to your service's strengths and needs.



Remember: Inclusion is a shared journey. The more you prepare, the stronger and more sustainable your plan for inclusion will be.

Preventing – not just reacting to – behaviours that challenge us

BY ALLY WILLIAMS AND TOBY-LEA GOODING,
Victorian Inclusion Agency,
It Takes A Village

Promoting positive behaviours in children

Supporting children's emotional and behavioural wellbeing starts with connection, understanding, and a consistent, responsive environment.

Here are some proactive strategies to promote positive behaviours in children:

- **Build strong relationships** with children, families, and each other. Understand individual needs through regular Care Team meetings, ensuring continuity of care across all environments.



Can you name five things about each child in your care?

- **Educator positioning matters.** Be present, observant, and responsive. Aim to implement the 'one-up rule': Only one educator completes tasks away from children at a time and all others stay actively present and available to children.
- **Reflect on the environment.** Have sensory tools and visual aids to create spaces that are welcoming, calm, inclusive, and accessible to all. These resources should be easy for all educators and children to see, access and use.
- **Focus on what you want to see more of.** Regularly offer specific, positive feedback to children to reinforce pro-social behaviours you have observed, such as turn-taking, positive communication, helpful or kind behaviours.



Print and display the 'Meaningful ways to encourage and praise a child' poster on page 18 for some ideas!

- **Model safe, respectful play.** Use stories, puppets, and social stories to help children explore feelings and relationships.
- **Commit to regular professional development and reflective practice as a team.** Understanding behaviour through a trauma-informed, neurodivergent-inclusive lens builds shared knowledge and confidence.



Check out 'Neurodiversity and neurodivergence: What do I need to know as an educator?' on page 14 to learn more about supporting neurodivergent inclusion.

- **Gain perspective** around different cultures and norms within your program.



How do you learn about families' cultural perspectives within your program?

- **Model respect and empathy.** How adults interact with children and each other sets the tone for the whole environment.
- **Offer crunchy, calming foods.** Where appropriate and safe, offer a variety of textured foods throughout the day to support regulation and sensory needs.
- **Be consistent and informed.** All educators should be familiar with the service's behaviour and learning support plans, as well as relevant policies and procedures.

Taking action to prevent the behaviours that challenge us isn't about control. It's about creating safe, predictable spaces where all children feel seen, heard, and supported to thrive.



Responding to behaviours that challenge us as educators

All behaviours are a form of communication. Responding to behaviours that challenge us with empathy, consistency and calm helps children feel safe and supported.

Here are some practical strategies for educators to use when responding to behaviours that challenge them:

- **Remember: Regulation starts with us.** Educators must be regulated before they can support and co-regulate with a child. Model self-care and emotional awareness.
- **Use language of what TO do.** Reframe instructions around what a child can do, not what they can't. This supports a clearer understanding and reduces the need for the child to interpret an educator's instructions.



For example: 'We walk inside. You can run outside if you need to move your legs.'

- **Use thoughtful language and tone.** Sometimes, fewer words are more effective, especially in heightened moments. Stay calm, kind and grounded.
- **Create a secure base.** Using Circle of Security principles, provide reassurance that children are safe, even when emotions are big.



For example, 'I can see you're feeling angry right now. I am here to help you when you're ready'. This shows empathy and understanding.

- **Know your supports.** Collaborate with professionals like Inclusion Professionals, Preschool Field Officers (PSFOs), and allied health teams for wraparound care.
- **Respect is key.** Uphold mutual respect through the 3 Rs: Relationships, Respect, and Repair.
- **Use de-escalation strategies.** Consider the individual child and their interests to incorporate strategies like bubble blowing, wet and dry sensory play opportunities, offering a drink of water, reading with the child, getting outdoors or playing a board game. Connect with the child in a way that works for them.
- **Use the 'Making Things Right' approach.** This approach supports children to take responsibility for their actions through natural consequences that offer meaningful learning opportunities. It could involve educators supporting children to check in with them or children impacted, helping to get their drink, cold face washer, or offering a kind gesture. It's important to ensure that any person who has been hurt is also acknowledged and supported. This helps all children and educators feel safe, respected, and valued.

Behaviour is not a problem to be 'fixed', it's a clue. When we respond with curiosity and compassion, we give children the tools they need to understand, learn, and grow.

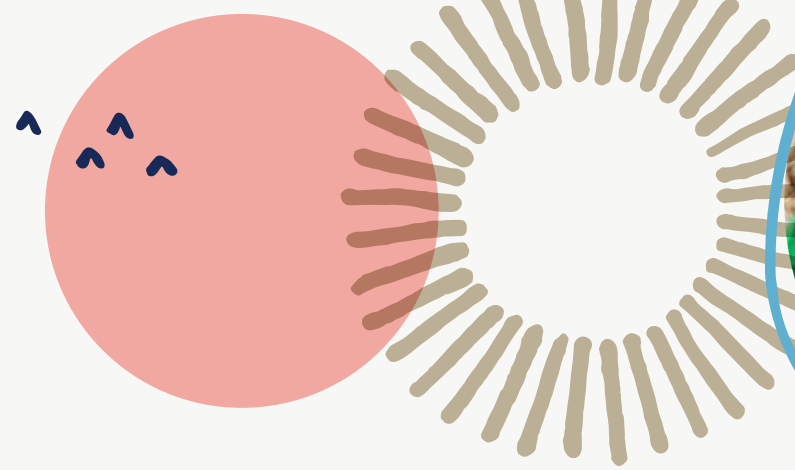


Curious to find out more? Check out these helpful online resources:

- Beacon House, [The Three Rs: Reaching The Learning Brain](#), 2019.
- Sue Larkey, [De-escalation strategies for students with autism](#).

Neurodiversity and neurodivergence:

What do I need to know as an educator?



Neurodiversity means that everyone's brain works differently, and that's completely normal. It's a way of thinking that supports fairness and inclusion for people with different kinds of minds. These differences are respected just like differences in race, gender, or ability.



It's important to remember that neurodiversity includes *all* people – not just those who are neurodivergent.

Neurodivergent individuals include those with Autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other conditions that affect how they think, learn, and behave.



Neurodivergent brains are wired with different strengths and challenges, often processing information, tasks, or social cues differently than neurotypical peers. They simply see and experience their environments in unique ways.

Things to consider as an educator

- Children who are neurodivergent can become more engaged with learning in an environment with structure and predictability, and that is scaffolded by visual supports and simplified adult-child interactions.
- Many children who are neurodivergent are very creative and can focus on things without any problems (hyperfocus is common in ADHD).
- Recognise and emphasise each person's individual strengths and talents, whilst also providing support for their differences and needs.
- Neurodivergence is not preventable, treatable or curable – no two profiles are the same. Cognitive differences between how neurodivergent people think, learn and behave are normal.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Does your team acknowledge that all neurodivergent children will do things differently from their neurotypical peers? How do you address the bias for neurotypical behaviour?

How you can support children who are neurodivergent

- Modify the environment and program to meet each child's needs, especially children who are neurodivergent, to enable full participation without requiring them to change their mannerisms.
- Consider implementing and utilising sensory items such as weighted blankets, textured material, water, stress balls, etc.
- Try strategies like visual schedule boards/steps for completing tasks, more time to complete tasks, and simplified adult-child interactions to support learning and participation.
- Support transitions by breaking activities or requests into smaller steps and give instructions one at a time. Ensure completion before adding the next step.
- Support transitions further by providing verbal, visual and auditory supports. This could look like implementing visual timers, clocks, sand timers, simplified language, transition items for the child to hold, etc.
- Build strong relationships with the child's family and allied health professionals to support consistent strategies across all environments.

Create a neurodivergent-friendly room

- **Set it up with intention:** Are there spaces for children to play and socialise in groups and individually?
- **Provide calm corners:** This can be set up with pillows, music, headphones, sensory items and earmuffs for children to retreat to.
- **Rethink visual clutter:** Are the walls covered with artwork or posters, or is there a lot of material or resources hanging from the ceiling?
- **Notice noise level:** Are educators and children minimising how loud they are talking? Is there constant loud music being played in the background? Can tables have tablecloths added to help reduce noise from resources?
- **Offer small groups:** Split the group among indoor/outdoor opportunities to minimise the busyness and any feelings of overwhelm.



Need help with something specific?
Reach out to your Inclusion Professional for tailored advice!

For more practical tips to support the learning and sensory needs of children at your service, check out our article, '[Supporting sensory needs in early learning and OSHC](#)' with Robyn Papworth in edition 17 of *Embrace*.



FIND OUT MORE:

Australian Institute of Family Studies 2022, [Supporting children with neurodiversity](#).

Raising Children 2024, [Neurodiversity and neurodivergence: A guide for families](#)



Early help, lasting impact: the success of a Specialist Equipment loan

Goodstart Early Learning Grovedale – Torquay Road's Assistant Director Christy Bairamidis spoke with Inclusion Professional Kristabel Fitzgerald about how a Specialist Equipment Library (SEL) loan is supporting a child through their education and care journey.

Kristabel Fitzgerald: *How has utilising the Specialist Equipment Library (SEL) helped Phillip* be included in your service?*

Christy Bairamidis: The SEL has played a crucial role in enabling Phillip to participate meaningfully in all areas of our program. With access to the right equipment, we were able to tailor the environment to his needs without compromising his ability to join in daily routines and experiences. This meant Phillip could engage alongside his peers safely and confidently, fostering social interactions, building his independence and supporting his development.

Kristabel: *How did you first go about securing SEL for Phillip? Can you tell us about this process?*

Christy: We initially reached out to our IP to begin the process and together we developed a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP). We then completed an item request form with support from the allied health team and submitted both the completed request form and the signed parent consent form to the Specialist Equipment team.

Once approved, the equipment was shipped out. The allied health team visited the service to fit the equipment for Phillip, ensuring it was appropriate and correctly adjusted for him. They continue to provide ongoing support, checking in regularly to confirm the equipment remains suitable and meets his evolving needs.

Kristabel: *What type of equipment have you borrowed for Phillip over the years?*

Christy: We've borrowed a range of equipment to support Phillip across various stages. This has included supportive seating, a standing frame, switch toys and an electric change table. Each item was chosen based on Phillip's current goals and physical support needs, which evolved as he transitioned from the nursery room to the pre-kinder room.

Kristabel: *How has the SEL helped Phillip in each room?*

Christy: In the nursery room, equipment like supportive seating allowed Phillip to sit safely at the table and interact with peers during meals and play. As he progressed into the toddler and pre-kinder rooms, supportive aids such as the seating chair enabled him to engage in group times or floor activities.

His seating frame has also been a valuable support during group time, allowing Phillip to sit comfortably on the mat alongside his peers and fully engage in the kinder program. With the support of specialist equipment, Phillip has been able to take part in Kelly Sports, a weekly incursion held every Tuesday, and he especially enjoys outdoor play.

Kristabel: *Your service has done a fantastic job looking after the equipment. Any tips for other services?*

Christy: We treated the SEL equipment as an extension of our own resources, assigning responsibility to specific educators for checking and maintaining the items daily. We trained staff on how to use and store the equipment. If we notice any faults, we promptly reach out to the SEL team, who are always happy to assist. Additionally, if we no longer need an item, the process for having it picked up is very straightforward and easy.

Kristabel: *What wider impact has the SEL had in your service?*

Christy: The SEL has done more than just provide equipment – it has helped shift our thinking as educators.



It has encouraged us to see inclusion not simply as making adjustments, but as proactively designing environments and routines that welcome and support all children from the very beginning.

Phillip's presence in our service has enriched our practice and highlighted the importance of advocating for access to resources like the SEL.

?

The Specialist Equipment Library (SEL) is a free service managed by the Victorian Inclusion Agency, through Yooralla.

We loan equipment that allows children with disabilities or additional needs to participate in your daily program and activities.

Contact your Inclusion Professional to gain access to the fantastic resources available in the SEL.

* Child's name has been changed.

Meaningful ways to encourage and praise a child

The words we use with children have a lasting impact.

It's important to be mindful of what we say to children and repeat words that help them feel confident in themselves and their abilities.

Use these thoughtful phrases to encourage children to believe in themselves.

You've got this!

I know you're up for the challenge

I'm here for you if you need help

You're going to do great

I'm excited for you

I can't wait to see what you try

I'm proud of you for giving this a go

Do what you can!

Praise is powerful, but it works best when it's specific and focused on effort, not just results.

Try out these mindful phrases to build confidence, problem-solving, independence and a growth mindset in children:

You listened and followed the instructions so well

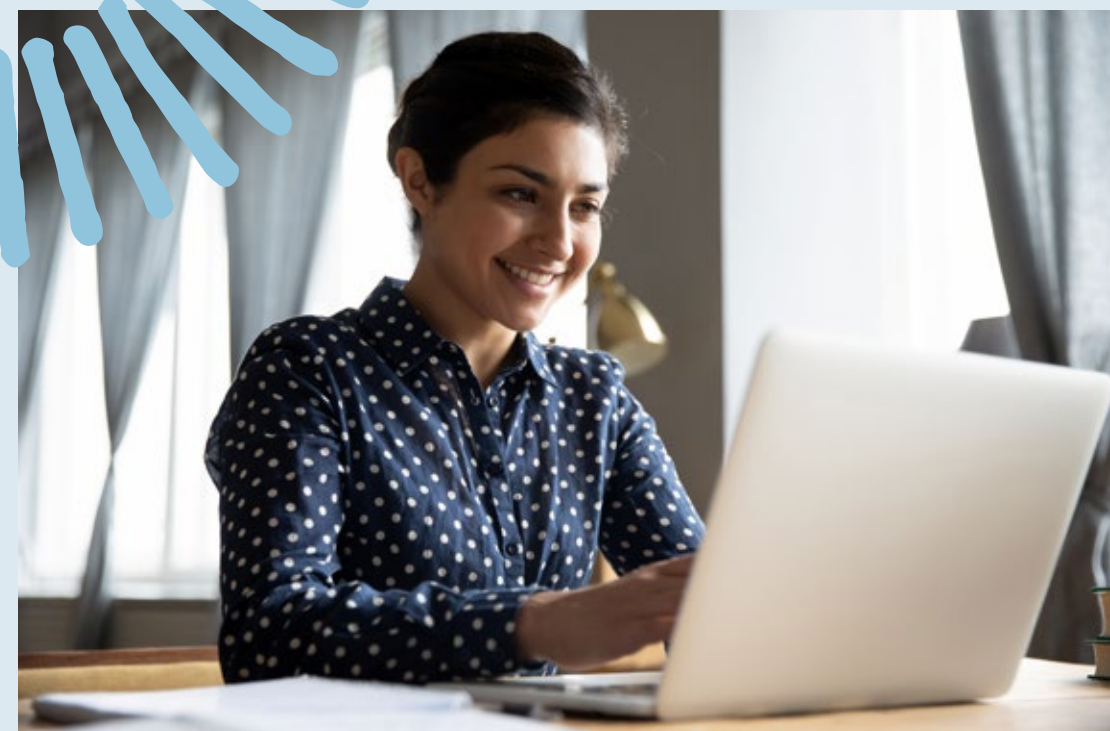
You worked really hard on [that drawing]

I noticed how you kept trying even when it got tricky

You tried something new and gave it a really good go

I really liked how you helped [pack up the toys]

It was so kind of you to help [your friend use the tap]



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