

Guidelines for Inclusion and Diversity



Early Learning and Childcare facilities

Inclusion means that **all children and their families are welcomed and supported to participate** in every aspect of early learning and childcare programs. Inclusion requires early learning and childcare operators and the staff members to create an environment that supports meaningful connections and caring relationships with children and their families.

The ***Early Childhood Services Act*** states:

Inclusion

18.1(1) An operator of a licensed facility shall provide services in an inclusive environment that respects the diversity of children and families related to race, colour, creed or religion, national origin, ancestry, place of origin, age, disability, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity or expression, social condition and political belief or activity.

18.1(2) An operator of a licensed facility shall develop and implement an inclusion policy.

18.1(3) An inclusion policy shall include the following:

(a) how the operator will be creating an environment at the facility that supports, reflects, and promotes equitable and inclusive practices to ensure that services are responsive to the needs, values and cultural beliefs of the families using the services.

Inclusion and Diversity Policy Statement is articulated in the **Parent and Guardian Handbook** and the **Staff Handbook**.

Language of the Inclusion and Diversity Policy Statement reflects Early Childhood Services Act and New Brunswick Human Rights Act Criteria:

- Includes the three key elements of inclusion: access, participation, and support
- All Abilities
- Inclusive of diverse cultures, languages, ethnicities and backgrounds
- Uses Inclusive language (all, everyone)
- Uses strength-based language (e.g., "We welcome children of all abilities." Instead of "We welcome children with disabilities.")

<p>Other Policies and Procedures in the Parent and Guardian Handbook and Staff Handbook are consistent with the Inclusion and Diversity Policy Statement</p>	<p>The policies and procedures in the Parent and Guardian Handbook and Staff Handbook reflect inclusive practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Positive child guidance policies and practices <input type="checkbox"/> Hours of operation <input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment policy & discharge policy and procedure (<i>see below</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Policies on reasons for children’s absences <input type="checkbox"/> Policies on children’s illness, including exclusion criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation services, if offered <input type="checkbox"/> Policies on children’s participation in outings <input type="checkbox"/> Types of organized outings that take place away from the place of operation <input type="checkbox"/> Parent involvement policies <input type="checkbox"/> Personal effects that children can bring <input type="checkbox"/> Complaints procedures
<p>Enrollment Policy & Discharge Policy and Procedures consistent with the Inclusion section of the <i>Early Childhood Services Act</i>.</p>	<p>Enrollment Policy & Discharge Policy and Procedures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A statement that children of all abilities, race and backgrounds are accepted. ✓ A statement about how families will be informed and engaged in the decisions and planning for transitions. ✓ A statement describing what steps/actions will be taken to maintain a child’s enrollment within a facility <u>before</u> reducing hours, suspending services, or discharging and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Educators have observed and documented <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with parents/guardians to gather their input and plan the support required <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with the Quality Assurance Monitor, Early Learning Consultant and the staff from the Inclusion Support Program <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in professional learning/training specific to the situation (challenging behaviours, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Provide referrals to community resources and services. <input type="checkbox"/> Other

Inclusion and Diversity in Early Learning and Childcare Facilities

Inclusive early learning and childcare facilities promote the access, meaningful participation, and support of all children. They are fully accessible to children and their families regardless of their race, colour, religion, national origin, ancestry, place of origin, age, disability, marital status, real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity, sex, social condition or political belief or activity.

The New Brunswick **Human Rights Act** states:

6(1) No person, directly or indirectly, alone or with another, by himself, herself or itself or by the interposition of another, shall, based on a prohibited ground of discrimination:

- a) deny to any person or class of persons any accommodation, services or facilities available to the public, discriminate against any person or class of persons with respect to any accommodation, services or facilities available to the public.

Early learning and childcare facilities are considered a service available to the public.



Access

Every child and their family has a right to be included, accepted and feel a sense of belonging in early learning and childcare.

Participation

All activities, inside and outside of the facility are planned so that all children can attend and participate in a meaningful way.

Support

Families and their children are supported, and their unique needs recognized.¹

All children have access and support to participate meaningfully in all daily routines and activities

- Modification and adaptations are made for children with additional needs (e.g., foods, medications, equipment, room adjustments, etc.)
- Operator is aware of the Inclusion Support Program.

¹ Adapted from Manitoba Child Care Program, Manitoba Government, Writing and Inclusion Policy: A Guide for Child Care Centres and Homes 2009.

Early learning and childcare operators and staff members have the obligation to accommodate all children regardless of abilities when this can be done without incurring undue hardship.

This includes:

Prospective clients (children are not enrolled, but parents have expressed interest).

Current clients (children already enrolled at the childcare facility).

Human Rights Commission: **Duty to accommodate**

The Early Learning and Childcare Operator understand the New Brunswick **Human Rights Act** and the **Duty to Accommodate**.

Have you ever discharged a child and their family?

If you had to discharge a child and family, what specific strategies, resources and supports were put in place before asking the child and family to leave or be discharged?

- Educators have observed and documented
- Meeting with parents/guardians to gather their input and plan the support required
- Collaborate with the Quality Assurance Monitor, Early Learning Consultant and the staff from the Inclusion Support Program
- Participate in professional learning/training specific to the situation (challenging behaviours, etc.)
- Provide referrals to community resources and services
- Other

- Have you watched the webinar on the **Duty to accommodate** in relation to the Human Rights in New Brunswick?

Does this facility have children supported by an Inclusion support worker?

- Yes
- No

Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone involved in early learning and childcare has a role to play in supporting inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. Below are listed some of the responsibilities of key people who provide leadership and guidance.

Staff in early learning and childcare facilities

Operator and/or Administrator

The operator or administrator of an Early Learning and Childcare Facility:

- Ensures that there is an Inclusion and Diversity Policy Statement in both the Parent and Guardian Handbook and the Staff Handbook.
- Ensures other policies, procedures and practices align with inclusive practices and the inclusion policy.
- Ensures all aspects of inclusion and diversity are implemented in the facility.
- Builds a collaborative relationship with families and work together in identifying how best to support their children.
- Collaborates with other professionals and service providers involved with the children.
- As required, hires Inclusion Support Workers and ensures that they are an integral part of the team.
- Involves the Inclusion Support Worker in creating the support plan for the children and monitor the progress of the support plan.
- Ensures that the Inclusion Support Worker participates in professional learning and staff team meetings as required.
- Collaborates with parents, guardians, and school services (educational Assistant, resource team) to support school-aged children in the facility.
- Understands the responsibilities under the New Brunswick *Human Rights Act*, in particular the Duty to Accommodate.

A one-hour webinar on the Duty to accommodate is available for operators and educators. Send an email to elc.sge@qnb.ca requesting access for the webinar.

Early Childhood Educator

The educator working with children in the facility:

- Understands the facility's Inclusion policy statement and lead inclusionary practices throughout the learning environment.
- Uses strategies and make adaptations and accommodations to help set up the learning environment so that all children can participate and have access to meaningful learning

opportunities.

- Takes all children's strengths and interests into consideration in planning learning activities and experiences.
- Collaborates with the operator, administrator and inclusion support worker to:
 - ✓ Observe, document, and reflect on the individual needs of all children.
 - ✓ Engage and involve families in the plan to support the children in the program.
 - ✓ Communicate regularly and update the parent and guardians about their child.
 - ✓ Collaborate with professionals and service providers to create and contribute to a plan to support children with additional needs (with consent from a parent or guardian).
 - ✓ Collaborate with school services (educational Assistant, resource team) and contribute to planning, whenever possible (with consent from a parent or guardian).
- Participates in professional learning that strengthens inclusion and diversity, especially the ***Tools for Inclusion*** webinars available at Inclusion NB.

**It is strongly recommended that all educators attend the "Tools for Inclusion" web series and other relevant trainings.*

Inclusion Support Worker

The Inclusion Support Worker (individualized support and shared support):

- Completes the *Tools for Inclusion* webinars and participates in other relevant training.
- Collaborates with other staff members to:
 - ✓ Observe, document, and reflect on the individual needs of children they are supporting.
 - ✓ Engages and involve families in the plan to support the children in the program.
 - ✓ Collaborates with professionals and service providers to create and contribute to a child support plan.
 - ✓ Collaborates with school services (educational assistant, resource team) and contribute to planning whenever possible.
- Uses strategies and make adaptations and accommodations to support successes for the children.
- Provides a "just right" level of support to allow the children to fully participate in the same activities and routines as their peers by knowing the children's support needs.
- Takes the children's strengths and interests into consideration.
- Provides opportunities to work towards independence whenever possible by decreasing support as skills improve.
- Seeks opportunities for the children to develop friendships with peers and relationships with others.
- Allows opportunities to practise regulation of emotions (when applicable).
- Guide the children in how to follow directions, ask questions and make requests.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Early Learning Consultant

The Early Learning Consultant:

- Supports the development and implementation of inclusion and diversity policies.
- Supports the implementation of inclusive practices in the facility.
- Provides consultations and information about the Inclusion Support Program.
- Provides or directs facility staff members to relevant professional learning.
- Provides child-centered support for observation, documentation, and planning.
- Supports educators in targeted social and emotional and behavioural strategies.
- Provides specific situational strategies and ideas to make improvements and changes to the learning environment to be more inclusive of children who may have additional needs.
- Provides strategies for family engagement.
- Provides guidance in the development of support plans for children.

Licensing Staff (Early Learning and Childcare services)

Licensing staff provide guidance and support to operators to ensure ongoing compliance with the *Early Childhood Services Act*. Specific to inclusion and diversity, they:

- Review general information related to inclusion and diversity with the operator or administrator and other staff members.
- Ensure the implementation of inclusive practices in the facility in accordance with the *Early Childhood Services Act*.
- Review the inclusive practices and diversity criteria and ensure they are met.
- Verify that the Inclusion Policy is included in the Parent and Guardian Handbook and Staff Handbook.
- Ensure that other policies or practices contained in the parent and guardian handbook are inclusive, as defined by the *Early Childhood Services Act*.
- Act as a resource for operators and administrators and provide referrals to resources, programs, and services as required.
- Verify compliance to the *Early Childhood Services Act* related to inclusion, access, equity and diversity.