The Rainbow Children’s Centre Inc.

Philosophy

a) We acknowledge that each person’s life journey is unique, and that support needs can vary from person to person. We respect each child as an individual with personal rights and the programs provided by Rainbow should create an environment which supports and encourages the potential of each child.

b) We prioritise the best interests of children, but also recognise that we must look at the best interest of families, community and staff in determining the best interests of children.

c) We respect families as the primary carers of their children with the centre and its staff supporting families in caring for and educating their children. Rainbow recognises the value of open and trusting communication between the centre and the child’s home and family.

d) We hold the values of respect, care, justice, unity and service to be central to our culture and believe in demonstrating them in creative responsiveness to the family needs of our community. We foster in each child the values of respect and consideration for others.

e) We believe in offering services that recognise and honour the whole person: body, mind, heart and spirit.

f) We believe a learning environment that combines the warmth and nurturing of a home with the stimulus of an early childhood educational setting encourages optimal development of each child.

g) We value the natural environment, both within the centre and in the wider community and we encourage children to respect and nurture the environment.

h) We recognise the diversity of Australian culture and will encourage respect for that diversity and will reflect and celebrate diversity within the centre. In particular Rainbow recognises this region as being home to many Indigenous Australians and that Rainbow services will operate in ways to respect and value that aspect of Australian culture.

i) We believe in responsible stewardship: placing high value on our human resources, while promoting rigorous attention to the financial, structural and material.

Mission

In relation to its early childhood intervention services

i) provide an educational service which maximises the learning and development of each child; and

ii) support families in accessing appropriate support and specialist services; and

iii) provide family friendly experiences and opportunities to support the child's everyday learning environments; and

iv) strengthen the capacity of other early childhood services in Ballina Shire to meet the needs of children through inclusive programs.
Vision

Our Early Intervention program

While the service is required to meet the NSW Disability Services Standards for funding requirements, it will also be influenced by the National Quality Framework (early childhood services) and the Early Years Learning Framework. Our service will also be influenced by the Early Childhood Australia and Early Childhood Intervention Australia Position Statement on the Inclusion of children with a disability in early Childhood Education and care.

(1) Our service would keep aware of the early childhood intervention sector and recognise the recommendations of research and current best practice principles in determining an optimum program.

(2) The service would recognise the child as part of a family and emphasise a sense of belonging first to a family, then to the wider community. The service would promote inclusive practice to enhance this sense of belonging. Our programs would emphasise learning to participate fully and actively in society.

(3) Each child would have their strengths and challenges acknowledged as part of the program and individualised educational plans would reflect the diversity of each child’s learning and development within their everyday learning environment, at home and in services within their community.

(4) Planning would be ongoing and dynamic with realistic goals developed with the family and documented within Individualised Family Service Plans and Individualised Educational Plans. Families would be respected, supported and involved in all decisions affecting their child. We have a vision of families being agents of positive social change and would empower families to advocate on behalf of their child and by providing information to understand systems supporting people with a disability and strengthening their understanding of their rights.

(5) Early Intervention Educators would respect parent’s feelings and recognise that many will be coming to terms with their child’s disability. We would communicate honestly and sensitively with families and work with other professionals to assist the child and family as appropriate.

(6) The service would have links with community organisations and early intervention educators would collaborate and share information with relevant agencies and encourage families to share ideas and contribute to these partnerships.

(7) The service would recognise the importance of a well qualified and experienced staff team and ensure ongoing professional development so that evidence based practice is reflected in the programs provided to children.

(8) Early Intervention educators would share knowledge, information and expertise on inclusive practice with educators of mainstream early childhood settings for children under 8 years of age to enable those settings to ensure children have equitable access and appropriate inclusive programs.

(9) The service would ensure that each family, including their child, is supported with the many transitions experienced in the early childhood years. Clear processes would be in place to support families with the transitions from home to early childhood setting and into school.

(10) Recognising the values of inclusion, cultural competence and a strengths based approach, the service would reflect the values of the diverse Ballina community including the Aboriginal community, which forms a high proportion of the Ballina community. We would use strategies which focused on building the capacity of each family.

(11) Meeting all accountabilities and requirements of the NSW Disability Standards as well as various funding accountabilities, we would balance the expectations of families and children, with the need to address those external requirements by providing programs based on evidence based practice which reflect educational practices for supporting the learning and development of children with disabilities and inclusive practice.