

# BERMAGUI PRESCHOOL



## 5.08 Gender Equity

### Written By

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### Background

It is important to challenge stereotypes early to give and provide elements where children can view themselves and others from different perspectives. Being attuned to children's thoughts and feelings supports the development of a strong sense of well-being, confidence, and feelings of being respected and valued.

This is of particular importance following the reported increasing levels of anxiety and stress arising in children, young people, and adults. It has been recognised that gender dysphoria and feeling vulnerable as a LGBTQIA+ teen contributes to these issues, causing isolation, depression and exclusion.

Bias can also have potentially limiting impacts, often unintentionally. For example, despite decades of thinking, and legislation, about gender equality, inequalities remain for many people, including disproportionate numbers of females entering STEM careers. When children have access to diverse text and images it can challenge stereotypes and open up opportunities that may not have been explored.

Learning about gender equity and identity at a young age aims to give rise to a future generation of people who can understand and support individual identity. Diversity contributes to the richness of our society. Each person's identity should be able to be expressed freely and safely. But most of all understanding, support and respect is needed. We need to help young children to find their voice, to be assertive, to persist in challenging circumstances and learn that love and acceptance are vital for strong and happy communities.

### Aim

Children are exposed to many factors which influence their attitudes, behaviours and aspirations. One of these factors is gender. By the age of four children have already formed an understanding of what it means to be a woman or a man in today's society. "When children play, they are making sense of their social world. In play they create and recreate their understanding of what they believe to be normal behaviour for boys and girls, women and men. They construct their play using what they have distilled from the adult world about normal gendered ways of being, thinking and acting." (Rethinking Gender in Early Years Education, Glenda MacNaughton 2000)

Stereotypical ideas about gender provide a very limiting and narrow definition of what individual children can and should be doing. This policy has been developed because Bermagui Preschool is aware of the important role we can play in challenging the constraints and inequities that gender stereotypes place on all children.

Bermagui Preschool is committed to developing the full potential of all children irrespective of gender. It affirms that all children are treated equitably in regard to ability, personality and behaviour. It further affirms the right of all children to:

- Develop and play without the limitations of stereotypes based on gender.
- Develop a sense of pride in oneself and one's accomplishments, to enhance feelings of positive self-esteem and self-worth.
- Develop respect for each other's rights and responsibilities.

## Strategies

### **To support the intent of this policy, Bermagui Preschool will endeavour to;**

- Ensure that all children regardless of gender are equally encouraged to participate in all activities with due consideration for individual needs and interests. For example, encourage all children to use the home corner, outdoor playing equipment and toys such as cars and dolls.
- Encourage non-sexist behaviour by children and staff.
- Purchase resources and materials that promote gender equity and counter sexist and violence supportive attitudes, for staff use and supply staff development programs focused on issues of gender equity, sexism and education.
- Encourage all children to express emotions and display affection.
- Ensure that all language used within the centre, both verbal and written, is gender inclusive.
- Encourage use of materials which portray women and men in roles, situations and jobs which are not stereotyped.
- Select resources where all children are seen as both initiators and nurturers.
- Ensure that all children regardless of gender equally share staff time, indoor/outdoor playing space and equipment taking into account individual needs and interests.
- Encourage the employment of both female and male staff and ensure that tasks carried out by staff are not related to gender.
- Encourage educational or information opportunities that further the aims of this policy.
- Regard all individuals equally and will provide opportunities for both boys, girls and non binary children to develop to their full potential regardless of gender/ gender identity.
- Show sensitivity for different culture child rearing practices and discuss the value of various learning experiences with families.

### **The approved provider will:**

- Ensure the development, implementation and review of and maintenance of the policy.
- Provide families with information about the importance of a gender equity approach in achieving positive outcomes for all children.
- Consider barriers to participation in service programs and activities and developing strategies to overcome these.
- Ensure that staff have access to appropriate and accredited professional development activities that promote a positive understanding of gender equity and develop skills to assist them in implementing this policy.
- Provide support and guidance to educators/staff.
- Ensure that educators and all staff are aware of Bermagui Preschool's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families.
- Ensure that any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice are dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Develop and deliver an educational program that is reflective of the Bermagui Preschool's values, beliefs and philosophy, and embraces the principles of fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion.

**Educators will:**

- Ensure the day-to-day implementation of the gender equity policy.
- Be aware of the Bermagui Preschools expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families.
- Ensure that the program provides opportunities for all children to participate and interact with one another, irrespective of gender.
- Undertake appropriate professional development on issues about gender equity
- Understand and respect how different cultural child-rearing and social practices may view gender roles.
- Use family-centred practice and working collaboratively with staff, parents/carers, specialist services and other professionals to implement a gender equity approach at the service.
- Provide opportunities for families to contribute to the gender equity program.
- Notify management or appropriate staff of any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice.
- Critically reflect on practice to ensure that interactions and programs embrace a gender equitable approach in which children and families feel valued and respected, and that their contributions are welcomed.
- Incorporate a gender lens across their reflective practice and observations.

**Relevant Legislation**

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
 National Quality Standards 2010  
 Sex Discrimination Act 1984  
 Equal Opportunity Act 2010  
 Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006  
 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child  
 and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
 National Quality Standards 2010

**Resources & References**

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
 The National Quality Standard 2010  
 Being, Belonging and Becoming: The Early Years Framework for Australia 2009  
 Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics  
[https://www.mav.asn.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/7279/DarebinCity-Council-Creating-Gender-Equity-in-the-Early-Years-A-Resource-forLocal-Government.pdf](https://www.mav.asn.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/7279/DarebinCity-Council-Creating-Gender-Equity-in-the-Early-Years-A-Resource-forLocal-Government.pdf)  
 MacNaughton, G. 2000. Rethinking gender in early childhood education.  
 Sydney: Allen & Unwin.  
<https://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au/>  
 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
 The National Quality Standard 2010  
 Being, Belonging and Becoming: The Early Years Framework for Australia 2009

**Relevant Documentation**

This policy is displayed in the Preschool and will be provided as part of Bermagui Preschool Induction Procedure.

**Date Adopted:**

July 2022

**Review Date:**

July 2025