

BUILDING BELONGING

A PROCESS FOR SUPPORT THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (P-2)

International evidence clearly shows that Early Childhood is a vital period in children's learning and development. At Lyons Early Childhood School we celebrate the unique developmental and biological maturation of children during their Early Childhood years (birth to 8 years).

With this in mind, we have in place processes and strategies that help us to identify and focus on the particular needs of each child.

Once such process is SPECIAL NEEDS. This includes a whole-team approach that works along the following guidelines:

1. The SPECIAL NEEDS process supports the community in working together to identify, extend and enrich children's learning from birth to 8 years and through their transition to primary school.
2. The SPECIAL NEEDS process caters specifically for particular children (and their carers – educators and parents) who may benefit from additional support in their learning and development.

The SPECIAL NEEDS process includes a team that is made up of all educators involved in the child's program at the school. This may include childcare educators, itinerant and specialist teachers, class teachers and assistants, school psychologist, Executive Teacher, Deputy Principal and Principal.

The parents and / or carer and child are integral parts of this team.

The aim of the Special Needs team is to help each other provide children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning.

HOW DOES THE SPECIAL NEEDS PROCESS HAPPEN?

STEP 1. The child is identified as one who may benefit from additional support.

STEP 2. The child's teacher communicates with the parent or carer to gain consent to share information with the Special Needs Team.

STEP 3. If parental consent has been given, the teacher brings relevant information to a Special Needs Team meeting. The information, including parent/carer comments, is shared with the team.

STEP 4. The Special Needs Team agrees on suggested actions or strategies to be implemented.

STEP 5. The teacher provides feedback to the parent/carer. A plan is agreed on and documented.

STEP 6. The Plan is reviewed on a regular basis. This includes regular communication with parent/ carer. The formal review process will involve the teacher reviewing the documented plan and making adjustments to the plan as required. This is done in consultation with the parent/carer.

HOW ARE CHILDREN IDENTIFIED FOR SUPPORT THROUGH THE SPECIAL NEEDS PROCESS?

1. A teacher may seek additional support for a child in his / her care. They would discuss this with the parent, and, with their consent, share relevant information with the SPECIAL NEEDS team.
2. A parent/carer may seek additional support for their child. They would discuss this with the child's teacher, and, if appropriate, consent to the teacher sharing relevant information with the SPECIAL NEEDS team.




WHAT DOES 'ADDITIONAL SUPPORT' MEAN?

A child may benefit from more support in a particular area of learning or development, for example:

1. Literacy – reading, writing, speaking, listening
2. Numeracy
3. Social development (play, friendships, being part of a group)
4. Emotional development (separating and attachment, confidence, resilience)
5. Language skills (communicating)

A range of strategies can be implemented depending on the individual child and context.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE SPECIAL NEEDS PROCESS AT LYONS EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOOL

-  Not all children will participate in the process.
-  A child's inclusion in this process is seen as an opportunity to build on their strengths as a means of extending specific skills.
-  Partnerships with parents and carers are an essential element of the process.