

Gowrie

INCLUSION AGENCY TASMANIA

Inclusion Agency Team Professional Learning

Coaching framework training addressed the unique challenges of Inclusion Professionals, emphasising emotional well-being, informed decision-making, empathy, and effective leadership.

The team gained valuable insights into their strengths and areas for growth, enabling strategic goal setting.

Celebration of Practice

We celebrate Inclusive Practices at Cambridge Play and Learn. An Inclusive Program and holistic approach to the use of the additional educator to build educator's capacity, skills, and knowledge about working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

*"Nurturing Inclusion,
Growing Together"*

Welcome to Lady Gowrie Tasmania's Inclusion Agency newsletter, empowering inclusive education and care services across the state. Lady Gowrie Tasmania, are proud to be the state-wide provider of the Inclusion Agency (IAT), generously funded by the Australian Government Department of Education.

Our mission is simple yet profound: to champion inclusive practices in Education and Care Services across Tasmania.

Lady Gowrie Tasmania Inclusion Agency has offices in all three regions of the state.

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Roxanne Ellis
Inclusion Agency
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Roxanne has over 30 years experience in the Education and Care Sector. In 2001, she joined Lady Gowrie Tasmania in a part-time role, initially within what was then known as Access and Equity. She been a member of the Inclusion Agency team, implementing the delivery of the Australian Government Inclusion Support Program in its many formats across her 22 years with Lady Gowrie Tasmania.

She is driven by a commitment to social justice, in particular, the inclusion of all children within quality education and care programs, in care environments which are reflective of all children's needs, strengths and interest areas. Roxanne enjoys guiding educator teams to reflect on their program and practice through an inclusion lens, and then supporting teams to implement changes within their daily practice to meet the needs of all children more appropriately.

Lady Gowrie Tasmania acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Australia and pays our respect to the longest living cultures and Elders both past and present. We acknowledge and celebrate the resilience and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures today and acknowledge and respect their deep connection and relationship with Country and Community and commit to working together for a united Australia that values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all.

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A celebration of connection and participation through the implementation of inclusive practices at Cambridge Road Play and Learn.

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Celebration Of Practice

CAMBRIDGE ROAD

Play & Learn Centre

Inclusive Program and holistic approach to the use of the additional educator – to build educator's capacity, skills, and knowledge about working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Cambridge Road Play and Learn is driven to provide a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment for all children to participate and thrive within their service. The service has a strong relationship with the Inclusion Agency Tasmania and actively seeks advice and support from their allocated Inclusion Professional (IP). The service is currently receiving IDF additional educator funding to increase ratios to more appropriately meet the needs of all individual children within the care environment. Even with increased ratios level of support in place, it became evident through ongoing discussions with the educator team and IP that the service needed further advice about inclusive practices and navigating the inclusion of three children diagnosed with autism in the School Readiness Room on multiple days together across the week.

IP regularly visits the service to discuss barriers to inclusion and collaborates with educators to identify strategies and actions for ongoing implementation. The School Readiness Program has worked intentionally building strong relationships with children and understanding of the unique sensory profile of each child with an ASD diagnosis.

To overcome identified barriers to inclusion, strategies were developed by involving educators in working collaboratively with allied health professionals to support individual children's needs, including on the floor coaching from allied health professionals, the IP, and professional learning opportunities.

The aim was to build the understanding, skills and knowledge of all educators to respond more appropriately to challenging behaviour, sensory-seeking behaviours, and transition support.

IDF additional educator funding was key to the success of this program.

Celebration Of Practice



With the successful application for an additional educator to support the program, the educators have reported they are feeling more equipped, and their well-being supported to ensure the safety and inclusion of every child. Planned educator supported experiences to intentionally support each child's development are now being implemented successfully. Educators can actively plan and take the time to be with small groupings of children engaging them in sensory play, respectful of the children's individual interests and sensory profiles.

A strategy has been successfully implemented to offer flexibility in routines and support various sensory experiences by offering an indoor/outdoor program that is accessible to all children across long periods throughout the day. This enables small groupings, children's choice, using multiple outdoor areas across the day, sensory play, and heavy work provided consistently to meet each child's ongoing sensory-seeking behaviours and emotional regulation needs.

Allied health professionals are welcomed to the service regularly and educators engage in gaining advice and strategies to continue supporting children's learning and development.

Regular discussions with families and relationship building have been a strong focus to gather current knowledge of each child and daily communication is occurring with increased engagement from families to support a holistic approach.

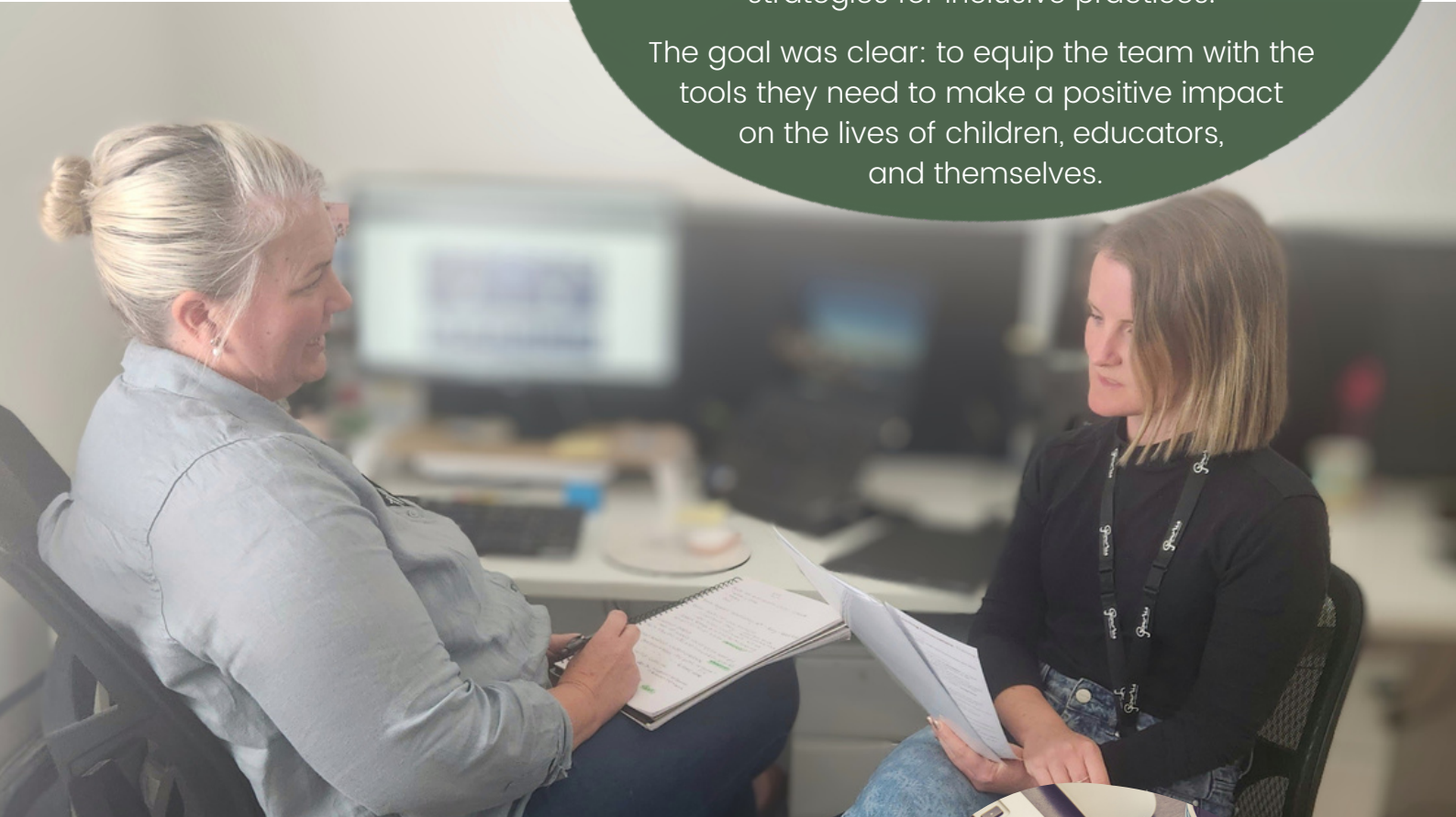
Cambridge Road has a strong commitment to including all children enrolled in the program. All staff have a positive outlook and speak of their challenges in a strength-based approach, always discussing strategies to support the whole care environment, and making conscious decisions to ensure the additional educator is utilised across the whole care environment to support all children.

Inclusion Agency Professional Learning

In September, the Inclusion Professional team took a significant step towards enhancing their ability to create inclusive environments and support services in the creation of inclusive environments that support the learning and development of children.

The team embarked on a journey of professional learning, guided by Melinda Maddock, a professional development coach with extensive experience in the field. Melinda delivered impactful coaching workshops designed to empower the team with the skills necessary to work more effectively with educators to support the implementation of strategies for inclusive practices.

The goal was clear: to equip the team with the tools they need to make a positive impact on the lives of children, educators, and themselves.



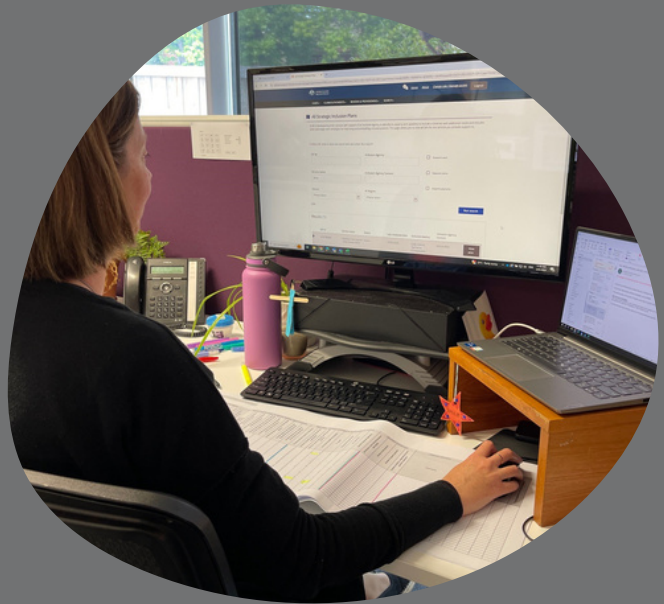
Gaining Insights and Setting Goals

Throughout the workshop, the team gained powerful insights into their strengths and identified areas for growth and improvement. By recognising individual and collective strengths, they were better prepared to set meaningful goals to challenge their current strategies. The commitment to improvement is at the core of the IAT's work, and through the workshops, the dedication to creating better outcomes for everyone involved in the inclusive education process was reinforced.



Tailored Training for Unique Challenges

Melinda's training was meticulously crafted to meet the specific needs of the team. Inclusion Professionals often encounter varying situations, each with its own unique dynamics. Therefore, the training was customised to address the challenges the team face daily. Participants learned strategies to enhance emotional well-being, make more informed decisions, communicate with empathy, and lead in ways that empower others. These skills are essential in an Inclusion Professionals role, where adaptability and empathy are paramount.



Three Sessions to Empower

The training was delivered over three sessions, providing a comprehensive learning experience. Two face-to-face group coaching sessions allowed for valuable in-person interactions and shared experiences. Additionally, an online session ensured that the team could discuss the implementation of their new learnings through recent service visits and collaborate on the design of the framework.

A Framework for Success

The ultimate goal of the workshop was to create a solid framework for the team to follow when supporting the inclusion of children with additional needs. This framework encompasses a holistic approach, addressing not only educational strategies but also the creation of inclusive environments and the provision of effective tools, equipment, and transition support. The team's commitment to inclusion remains unwavering. We look forward to putting the newfound knowledge and skills into practice to create more inclusive, empathetic, and empowering educational environments with you.

Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) information for families *Feature Article*



When conversing with families it is important to give them all the information they require to feel fully informed about the Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) and the way it is intended to be used.

The Inclusion Support Program (ISP) provides support to eligible mainstream education and care services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs alongside their typically developing peers, so all children have the opportunity to access, participate and achieve positive learning outcomes.

Support available through the ISP for services includes:

- Support from an Inclusion Agency (IA) – IAs employ skilled Inclusion Professionals who provide tailored support to eligible education and care services to address inclusion barriers and develop their inclusion capacity and capability.
- Specialist Equipment Library (SEL) – The service can borrow equipment to facilitate and support the inclusion of a child with additional needs. Please note all requests for Specialist Equipment must be supported by the child's therapist/s. The Inclusion Agency is able to assist an education and care service to access equipment through the Specialist Equipment Library.
- Funding from the Inclusion Development Fund – Eligible education and care services can access funding to address barriers to inclusion that cannot be resolved through support from an Inclusion Professional or the Specialist Equipment Library.

Children with additional needs

While there is no national definition of 'additional needs', there are children who may need or require special considerations or adaptations to participate fully in ECEC services (although not all children with additional needs will require support).

Additional needs may arise for children who:

- Have a disability or developmental delay
- Are presenting with challenging behaviours
- Have a serious medical or health condition, including mental health
- Are presenting with trauma-related behaviours.

If the service applies for an Additional Educator - What does this mean?

If a child has high support needs, the service may identify the need for an increased educator to child ratio for some of the time the child attends.

The additional educator works as a member of the team to provide a quality inclusive program for all children. The additional educator is not funded to provide one to one support for an individual child. The increase in the number of educators in the room will help educators to implement actions from their SIP, such as changes to the program which could include educator supported small group experiences, indoor/outdoor play offered at the same time, use of alternative ways of communicating with all children, more assistance for children to join in play and talk with their peers.

Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) information for families *Feature Article*



The IDF subsidy cannot be used

For one-to-one support for a specific child, assistance to meet ECEC service licensing requirements, assistance which is a state/territory responsibility, eg. school education, to provide therapy or early intervention supports, to solely provide medical/nursing assistance, or to engage an additional educator in a FDC environment

For more information on the IDF for families:

[For Families | KU IDFM](#)

What information will a family be asked to provide?

To support an IDF application for an Additional Educator or Family Day Care Top Up a family will need to sign a Department of Education 'Permission to Share Personal Information form' (Family Consent Form). If the service applies for longer term funded support, documentary evidence that demonstrates that the child has additional and ongoing high support needs will be required. Eligible documentation can include the child's current Health Care Card with the code 'CD', or documentation to show the child is a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participant. Other forms of documentation, such as a report or letter from a medical practitioner, psychologist, allied health professional including social worker or counsellor, or nurse practitioner including maternal health nurse may also be accepted.



How IDF subsidy can be used

To increase the educator to child ratio to support inclusion of all children in centre based care environments for a limited or longer term period; or to provide a fee top up payment to FDC educators who cannot enrol the maximum number of children due to the impact of including a child with significant high support needs; or to support flexible and alternative solutions to address inclusion barriers in the service which are not funded under other IDF support streams, or, addressed through support provided by the Inclusion Agency.

Upcoming Events

10th February - Luna New Year



18th-24th March - Harmony Week
21st March - Harmony Day



20th-26th March - National Playgroup Week

21st March - World Down Syndrome Day



23rd March - Holi (India)
25th March - Holi (Hinduism)



April - Autism Awareness Month
2nd April - Autism Awareness Day

6th-16th April - Nature Play Week



How we will support your service



Lady Gowrie Tasmania have a network of Inclusion Professionals across the state to work directly with your service to:

- Support educators to reflect on their understandings of inclusion.
- Provide practical inclusive practice support to educators to identify and overcome specific inclusion barriers.
 - Support educators to identify, acknowledge and reflect on their strengths.
- Assist services to develop a tailored Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP), which documents identified inclusion barriers together with inclusive practices, strategies, and actions for implementation at either a whole of service or care environment level.
- Coach educators and teams to critically reflect on their practice and identify possibilities for change, working alongside and role modelling the use of new tools and practical concepts.
- Facilitate access to all Inclusion Support Program (ISP) resources including Specialist Equipment and funding.
 - Support services to develop connections with relevant community groups, services, and organisations that contribute to an enriched and informed approach.
- Promote strong partnerships with families and other support networks to ensure an aligned approach to inclusion strategies.

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Inclusion is
for everybody