



# Participation Policy

## Service Quality, Risk & Compliance

<b>Introduction</b>	<p>Learning Links provides children and young people 2-18 years of age with the opportunity to enrol and participate in specialist support services where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning is core to their individual support needs</li><li>• They can learn, develop confidence, resilience and feel valued so they may achieve their individual potential</li></ul> <p>Parents/carers can access Learning Links services to gain specialist services to support children and young people.</p> <p>Learning Links is committed to providing services that do not discriminate based on race, religion, gender, ethnicity, language background, disability, parental care arrangements or sexual orientation when enrolling in the service.</p> <p>Our services are provided in a manner sensitive to families, and in response to their needs.</p> <p>Learning Links has a legal and moral responsibility to provide an open, welcoming, and safe environment for all children and staff, while ensuring that all interactions with children and adults are respectful.</p> <p>Our enrolment procedures are informed by principles of equity to ensure that children access age appropriate and relevant specialist support.</p> <p>This policy provides information on the specific participation criteria for each service area to guide assessing participation and enrolment in the service.</p>
<b>Eligibility</b>	<p>This Policy applies to all staff employed by Learning Links. The term staff also applies to students, interns, and volunteers. This policy also applies to workers carrying out work on behalf of Learning Links (e.g., contractors).</p>
<b>Policy</b>	<p>Learning Links staff are required to support respectful interactions between our staff and customers.</p> <p>Learning Links works collaboratively with families and relevant external providers to facilitate children's development and address families' needs and priorities including supporting them to identify a suitable key worker provider if required.</p> <p>Learning Links will implement strategies to support all children to interact with their peers and staff safely and participate in activities that promote their individual growth and development, with adjustments being made for children with additional learning support needs.</p> <p>Learning Links respects the right of families to exit any service and will provide them with information on how to re-enter the service if, and/or when required and will provide transitional support to other providers as required.</p> <p>Learning Links works with all families, including NDIS participants and their families, to mitigate risks to children's wellbeing in the event of an emergency or disaster, and works with them to change the ways we deliver supports at these times.</p> <p>Learning Links will discontinue a service after consultation with the families if the service is no longer sustainable or appropriate and will provide transitional support to other providers as required.</p> <p>Learning Links:</p>

- Determines enrolment and participation through a consultative process with families and professionals.
- Acknowledges that children, young people and their parents /carers have the right to current, concise, and transparent information about our enrolment procedures to inform their decision making.
- Enrolment is offered in consideration of the eligibility criteria across all programs and services.
- Enrolment and participation are managed via waiting lists and prioritisation in line with funding and/or legislative requirements. Referrals to other agencies and/or support programs will be made in instances where Learning Links is not able to offer enrolment due to a lack of vacancies, relevant resources, and expertise.

Learning Links requires our staff to adhere to Learning Links Code of Conduct in all interactions with internal and external customers.

Learning Links expects that customers will:

- Value and respect staff expertise and knowledge
- Make themselves available to staff as requested when necessary to have meaningful discussions to benefit the care and education of their child
- Adhere to any communication agreements made with professionals including frequency and time of communication
- Disclose all relevant information to support children's engagement in the delivery of the service
- Provide a minimum 2 weeks' notice for reports required from professionals
- Maintain confidentiality regarding children, parents and staff including when raising concerns
- Adhere to the legal requirements regarding consent in relation to recording / videoing / photographing customers and staff
- Adhere to the use of social media in non-defamatory ways
- Avoid involving any member of staff in the mediation or resolution of family disputes
- Adhere to the agreed terms and conditions in the Online and Telehealth enrolment information
- Ensure offensive conduct does not occur. Offensive behaviour includes but is not limited to:
  - Behaviour prohibited by law including discrimination
  - Physical or intimidating actions that pose a threat to a child or adult
  - Bullying or insulting behaviour towards staff, children, visitors or families, including verbal and non-verbal aggression and/or threatening or derogatory language or intimidation
  - Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs and/or using alcohol or drugs on the premises

The Police may be notified if the conduct of a parent/guardian or visitor is offensive, threatening or violent.

## Preschool Participation Criteria

The priority of access in state-funded Preschools is defined by the State Government in the Priority of Access Guidelines. Our participation criteria strictly adhere to these guidelines which include:

- Children who are at risk of harm
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Children from low-income families
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children with disabilities
- Children in their year before school (with highest priority given to children closest to school entry).

<p><b>Education, Therapy, and Psychology Participation Criteria</b></p>	<p>Places are determined by the availability and expertise of professionals, rooms, and the preferred day/s and time/s requested by families.</p> <p>Participation in Education, Therapy, and Psychology Programs and services can be accessed by children and young people who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary learning support needs that do not require specialist disability support service/s unable to be supported by Learning Links</li> <li>• The ability to engage in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ community settings</li> <li>○ activities and programs on a one-on-one or small group basis with professional/s and peers</li> <li>○ activities and programs for the relevant session duration.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Behaviours that do not present high risk to others and/or self</li> <li>• Assessment and/or school reports that identify their individual learning needs.</li> </ul> <p>Access to professional webinars and courses is available to external professionals in accord with webinars/courses being released and registration requirements being fulfilled. Learning Links expects and requires professional behaviour and respectful interaction at all times.</p> <p>Access to parent webinars and courses is available to parents/ carers in accord with webinars/courses being released and registration requirements being fulfilled. Learning Links expects and requires appropriate behaviour and respectful interaction at all times.</p>
<p><b>Limitations to Participation</b></p>	<p>Excluding Preschool and Playgroups, Learning Links' current services may not be suitable for children and young people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a primary diagnosis of severe or profound disability</li> <li>• Have moderate-severe sensory impairment</li> <li>• Have personal care support needs that cannot be supported by the parent while attending services</li> <li>• Have a primary acute mental health presentation</li> <li>• Present as significant risk to others and/or self</li> <li>• Require significant physical modifications to the service delivery environment:</li> <li>• Require home or equipment-based supports</li> <li>• Require access to specialist technology, adaptive and/or specialised mobility equipment</li> <li>• Require access to 1:1 medical intervention support when accessing services</li> <li>• Require access to AAC (Alternative and Augmentative Communication) technology</li> </ul> <p>Learning Links has a Business continuity and Disaster Recovery Policy and related Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan. Learning Links works actively with parents and families to ensure their children can access the necessary supports in the event of a disaster or emergency. We are committed to working with all families if this occurs, including those children identified as being vulnerable/ at risk if they are unable to access support.</p>
<p><b>Cessation of Services</b></p>	<p>Learning Links will make every attempt to work with families to avoid termination of a child's enrolment and may request a planning meeting/discussion to determine appropriate inclusion and enrolment options for a child or young person.</p> <p>Learning Links reserves the right to modify or terminate a child's enrolment in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failing to comply with the agreements listed in the Enrolment Form</li> <li>• Providing false information in relation to any aspect of enrolment requirements either verbally or in writing</li> <li>• Non-payment of fees and/or recurrent late payment of fees</li> <li>• Where the safety and or health of children and /or staff are at risk as a result of the child's behaviour or support needs that cannot be met</li> <li>• Repeated occurrences of non-attendance</li> <li>• Being unable to support the child's individual learning support needs and goals as identified by the family and professionals</li> <li>• Transfer of services due to redeployment of staff</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referring clients 18 years old and above to other agencies</li> </ul> <p>Learning Links reserves the right to modify or terminate a child’s enrolment in the Preschool in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where the safety and or health of children and /or staff are at risk as a result of the child’s behaviour or support needs that cannot be met.</li> <li>Repeated instances of knowingly delivering an unwell child to the Preschool or delivering a child with a significant illness that breaches current Health guidelines.</li> <li>Withdrawing or not providing consent to the sharing of information with the Department of Education or specified funding agencies. This includes and is not limited to census data collection and/or inclusion funding applications.</li> </ul> <p>In the event a family decides to withdraw a child’s enrolment, unless otherwise agreed, 4 weeks’ notice must be provided as per the Enrolment and Orientation Policy and Procedure.</p>
<p><b>Transitions between Learning Links and other providers</b></p>	<p>Learning Links will request or provide the following information in relation to children or young people transitioning to or from other professionals / providers to ensure collaboration and continuity of services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment reports</li> <li>Medical reports / summaries</li> <li>Transition reports</li> <li>Discharge reports</li> <li>NDIS Review Reports</li> </ul> <p>Learning Links Privacy Policy acknowledges that parents can choose not to share information with us, however non-disclosure of relevant information may impact service delivery.</p>
<p><b>Staff Participation in Learning Links services</b></p>	<p>Learning Links staff can access the following Learning Links services in accordance with the relevant service participation criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational Support</li> <li>Speech Therapy</li> <li>Occupational Therapy</li> <li>Psychology Group Programs and Assessments</li> <li>Preschool</li> <li>HIPPY</li> <li>Prep for Preschool</li> <li>Webinars made available (professional and/or parent)</li> </ul> <p>As a reflection of our Privacy Policy and to ensure staff confidentiality, Psychological Counselling support is not available to children of staff members; or staff themselves.</p> <p>Learning Links staff must adhere to the following requirements to access Learning Links services,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify any conflict of interest or concerns prior to accessing services.</li> <li>Follow the standard intake procedure and not approach professional staff directly to discuss service availability or bookings.</li> <li>Enrol in services in accordance with the scheduled fees and adhere to the terms and conditions.</li> <li>Be aware that in the process of delivering services we collect, store and use personal information, including sensitive information, about individual children and their families in accordance with our Privacy Policy.</li> <li>Be placed on one or more waiting lists until services become available. Services cannot be accessed ahead of customers on the waiting list.</li> <li>When accessing services only speak with the professional staff member providing the service at the scheduled booking time and/ or via an agreed meeting process and not outside normal working hours.</li> <li>Be aware that as a child safe organisation mandatory report may be made in accordance with Learning Links policy and procedure.</li> <li>Never access any information, electronic or otherwise, about family members, friends or acquaintances receiving services without authorisation in accordance with our Privacy Policy.</li> </ul>

<b>Legislation</b>	<p>Disability Standards for Education 2005  <a href="https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/disability_standards_for_education_2005_plus_guidance_notes.pdf">https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/disability_standards_for_education_2005_plus_guidance_notes.pdf</a></p> <p>Department of Education and Communities/ Early Childhood Education and Care:  <a href="https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/employers/disability-discrimination">https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/employers/disability-discrimination</a></p> <p>NSW Disability Standards  <a href="https://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/sp/quality/standards_in_action">https://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/sp/quality/standards_in_action</a></p> <p>Priority of Access Guidelines (as set under the Family Assistance Law)</p>
<b>Related Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Policy</li> <li>• Intake Procedure</li> <li>• Service Delivery Risk Management Procedure and Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Review</b>	<p>This policy and guidelines will be reviewed every two years and will incorporate current information, legislation and feedback as required.</p> <p>This policy is owned by: Quality &amp; Impact</p> <p>Policy updated on: 20 October 2022  Policy updated by: GM, Client Services and Operations</p> <p>Version number: 2.1  This version approved by: GM, Service Quality, Risk &amp; Compliance  This document can be viewed on: SharePoint</p> <p>Policy due for review: 20 October 2024</p>