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The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
✓	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
✓	Cultural competence
✓	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
✓	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

Inclusive practice for children with additional support needs

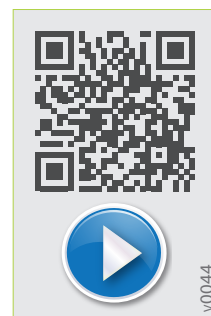
Inclusive practice is about finding equitable and effective ways to ensure that all children have opportunities to achieve learning outcomes. This is an ideal that should flow effortlessly from international conventions to national legislation and standards, to workplace philosophies and policies into workplace practice. It is your job to make this happen.

As an early childhood educator, it is your role to assist, support and encourage all children and their families to feel included and able to freely participate as valued members of the group.



You will encounter children with different backgrounds and experiences. You may also meet families and children in exceptional circumstances or with additional support needs. Have a good understanding of each situation and how these affect your role as an educator. At times, this will mean contributing to individualised, child-centred and/or family-centred planning and service delivery.

Watch this video about working with a child who needs additional support.



Useful strategies to implement with children who have additional support needs are described in the following table.

Additional support need	Possible implications for the educator
A child with behavioural or psychological disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Employment and leadership relating to additional support educators ▶ Developing or researching new or redeveloped strategies for guiding behaviour ▶ Contact with support networks, referral bodies, specialists and family advocates ▶ Additional action toward developing a secure, understanding and trusting relationship with the child ▶ Additional stress when dealing with children who have behaviours of concern ▶ Supporting parents and/or other carers of the child in developing guidance strategies ▶ Adapting experiences to enable the child to participate

The following examples demonstrate how an educator may have either low or high expectations of a child with a visual impairment.

Low expectations	High expectations
Oslo's parents overhear the educator telling the other children that Oslo is blind and that he can't see. The educator tells the children the things that Oslo can't do because he can't see properly. Oslo's parents feel that Oslo is being labelled negatively and is not receiving enough opportunities to succeed. They also feel that the children are being taught that vision is all that matters.	Oslo's parents overhear the educator telling the children that Oslo is visually impaired and cannot see well. The educator then tells the children that Oslo is clever at many things, including telling stories. The parents feel that Oslo is being valued and that his visual impairment is not the main focus.

Catering for diversity

As an educator, you must support all children to participate as valued members of the group, regardless of their background, gender, age and ability. This respect for diversity aligns with EYLF/MTOP Principle 4: Respect for diversity. Representing each child involves more than simply adding a range of diverse activities and resources to the curriculum. Through your everyday practice, you can model respect and appreciation of the differences between people and the richness they bring to our lives. By talking to children and their families, you can gain insight into their culture and values. With incidental and intentional teaching, you can address unfairness and highlight interdependence, which helps children understand how to accept and live with each other.

To cater for diversity, you may also:

- ▶ encourage children to ask questions about differences they notice
- ▶ help children feel comfortable asking questions
- ▶ guide children to ask questions in positive ways
- ▶ avoid deliberately criticising or embarrassing children
- ▶ play games in which children need to match themselves with others
- ▶ add various dolls to the home corner
- ▶ display posters of different types of people involved in everyday activities.

Reflecting on workplace practice

As you strive to practise inclusion in your daily routine, remember to allow time for reflection and review. This links with EYLF/MTOP Principle 5: Ongoing learning and reflective practice. Ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ What worked well?
- ▶ What didn't work?
- ▶ What could I have done better?
- ▶ Were my expectations appropriate?
- ▶ What feedback have I received (from other educators, the children or their families)?
- ▶ How will this affect the way I incorporate inclusion, equity and diversity into future programming?
- ▶ What other equitable and effective ways could I use to give all children an equal opportunity to succeed?

1B Planning for inclusion and participation

Planning for inclusion and participation of all children can be a difficult task. This approach is based on two different sets of rights:

- ▶ every child's right to an opportunity to attend an education and care services environment
- ▶ every child's right to be represented equally within that environment.

Using reflective practice

According to EYLF/MTOP Principle 5: Ongoing learning and reflective practice, educators must use reflective practice as part of their ongoing learning. They can do this by examining what happens in the service and reflecting on what they can change.

Reflective practice involves evaluating workplace practice to gain new insights into how it represents equity and social justice. It requires you to examine one aspect of this practice and reflect, or look deeper, to try to develop new solutions and improved practices.

Reflective practice is the process of asking yourself questions. An inquiry process is about evaluating your work and putting new actions in place. As with any useful improvement process, your reflective practice will be cyclical, and may resemble the following diagram.



For more information on reflective practice, go to: <http://aspirelr.link/reflective-practice-education>

Respecting the richness of society

Australia is a culturally rich society with a population drawn from all parts of the world. Australia's Indigenous people belong to the oldest continuous culture in the world. Each culture brings with it a different way of approaching daily life and viewing the world we live in. An appreciation and understanding of these different perspectives can enrich our lives and challenge our culturally embedded views.

Modelling respect for the cultural richness of society can be demonstrated by:

- ▶ having an interest in different cultural practices
- ▶ showing an equal interest in all cultures
- ▶ being willing to learn from members of a culture
- ▶ acknowledging that different cultural elements are a natural part of the learning environment.

Children can be taught to show respect by:

- ▶ being taught the meanings behind differences
- ▶ being taught about similarities and differences
- ▶ showing concern for others
- ▶ reflecting on their responses to diversity.

By experiencing this type of environment, children are challenged to explore, understand and acknowledge differences. EYLF/MTOP Outcome 1 states: Children have a strong sense of identity. This opens them up to some of the many different ways of being in the world, managing day-to-day life and living with others.

Respecting family differences

Families use education and care services for many reasons. As they enter the service, each child has their own interests, strengths and needs. Your service needs specific orientation processes to ensure parents, children and educators are prepared, and that these individual characteristics are identified and appropriate care can be arranged.

When the child of a new family requires additional support, your orientation procedure may alter slightly depending on the needs of the child. This may include time for you to arrange support structures, training or materials that are not already in your service.

If possible, identify whether a family needs support before entry to the service. Every family is different. Always acknowledge their concerns, values and feelings.

In many cases, the parent's feelings influence their values, goals and ideals for the child. Understanding these emotions, and developing an open and supportive relationship, enables you to create a more effective plan for their child.

Each family has its own pace of separation from their child based on the emotional needs of the family and the additional support needs of the child. Some will conclude the separation process in a few days. Others may need a few weeks to settle in. The age and stage of a child as well as the child's experiences, temperament, needs and abilities all affect this process. Respect these family differences and give each family the time it needs to settle their child into your service.

Promoting respectful behaviour

In addition to positive reinforcement of respectful behaviour, which supports positive relationships and interdependence, you need to openly address statements and actions that promote superiority or prejudice. Strategies you may find useful are outlined in the following table.

Lay ground rules	Let children know it is unacceptable to use words or actions that hurt or exclude others. Invite the children to think about this and come up with ideas about how they make others feel good or bad, then use these ideas to set limits.
Challenge	Don't wait until a topic comes up. Initiate discussion or exploration at any time it is suitable.
Use mistakes as learning opportunities	Most of us have encountered racism, sexism and other biased attitudes. An environment that allows mistakes is one where children will learn. If children make a mistake, encourage them to apologise and help them understand the consequences of their actions.
Address non-inclusive actions	Be prepared for prejudiced behaviour or communication that promotes superiority. Identify topics that may arise and keep some books, puppets or other materials ready.
Share real experiences	Let children know about times when you felt excluded.
Encourage empowerment	It is not enough to support a child who has been excluded or has been made to feel uncomfortable about an aspect of themselves. Provide the child with the ability to share information, and feel confident and proud about their differences.

Example

Teaching children about interdependence

Sadia feels embarrassed among the other children as she is the only one with dark skin.

Wilma, an educator, notices that Sadia stands back from the other children. Sometimes a child asks Sadia why her skin is like that and an educator will come over and tell the children that it is not okay to ask questions like that.

Wilma decides to deal with the issue differently:

- ▶ She makes sure that different shades of skin are represented in posters and books in the room.
- ▶ She asks the children to bring in photos of their families to put up on the wall so they can see how different everyone else's family is.
- ▶ She develops a group time plan to use the family photos to show how the children have similarities that come from their parents.

In this way, Wilma incorporates discussion of Sadia's family and skin colour. She finds a simple book about melanin (which produces different skin tones) and uses this for discussion with the older children.

Learning checkpoint 2

Respecting diversity

Part A

Interview two sets of parents from two different families. Explain that their participation will help you understand more about families, and the differences and similarities of children within the service. Remind the parents that their participation is voluntary and that they do not have to contribute any information they wish to keep private.

1. Ask the parents questions that focus on the differences in each family home. Consider family routines, culture, lifestyle and values. Provide a written copy of the questions that you asked and the families' responses.
2. Identify **four** similarities and **four** differences between each family.

3. Choose one child from one of the families you have just interviewed. Explain how this child's rights could be valued and acknowledged within a service. Consider the following:
 - ▶ How the child's family culture has been valued and acknowledged
 - ▶ How the child's personal identity has been valued and acknowledged
 - ▶ How the child's abilities and strengths have been valued and acknowledged



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Investigating barriers to learning

3B Using information to inform actions

Identifying children with barriers to learning

The first step to providing an inclusive child-centred curriculum is developing an understanding of the barriers to a child's learning. This involves obtaining as much information as possible from a range of sources.

3A Investigating barriers to learning

Barriers to learning are problems or situations that prevent children from accessing programs, make it difficult for children to join in play with others, or make it difficult to concentrate and learn.

It is every child's right to be able to play and learn, and it is your responsibility to support them to do so. You have a duty of care to encourage all children to be part of the learning environment you provide, and this responsibility means that you need to be aware of possible barriers and work diligently to eliminate these.



Children's rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child acknowledges the rights of all children to education. Article 29 states the following:

'The education of the child shall be directed to:

- a. The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- b. The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- c. The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- d. The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origins;
- e. The development of respect for the natural environment.'

With these aims in mind, you have a responsibility to fully investigate the child's barriers to learning.

Additional support needs

You may be caring for and educating children who have additional support needs, such as those outlined in the following table.

Additional support needs	Examples of diagnosis and/or causes
Language/communication difficulties or impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Physical factors relating to mouth, nose and/or throat, muscle tone, structural problems, nerve or muscle control or hearing problems ▶ Syndromes or disabilities, such as autism, hearing impairment, intellectual delay or vision impairment ▶ Acquired brain injury ▶ Environmental factors such as lack of stimulation or neglect

Practice task 5

1. Use a checklist similar to the following to observe any barriers in your service.

Possible barrier	How to reduce the barrier to learning
Social attitudes of educators	
Physical access	
Economic factors	
Organisational procedures and practices	
Existing client service strategies	
Educational environment	
Educator skills	
Support systems	
Communication supports and/or requirements	

2. For each of the following additional support needs, identify a barrier in your service that may affect the child’s inclusion:

a. Child with behavioural or psychological disorders

b. Child at risk of harm or illness

c. Child with difficult family circumstances

3B Using information to inform actions

Information gathered about a child is confidential, and you need to obtain the parent's permission before sharing it with others. You need to be clear about what information is to be shared, who it is to be shared with and for what purpose. The same applies to obtaining information about the child from other support services or professionals. Approaches to others should only be made with the parents' knowledge and permission.



Discussing your concerns with others

Confidentiality and privacy are some of the most important issues you face when considering the legal and ethical aspects of your role. The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) protects all personal information handled by businesses, including education and care services.

Any information about the children and their family members must be kept private and only shared with the appropriate people when necessary. If you need to discuss something about a child with another educator, do it in private where other children and parents can't hear.

Your role in regard to privacy is to:

- ▶ understand what is required of you
- ▶ read and implement procedures that link to privacy and confidentiality
- ▶ ensure you follow the policies and procedures relating to confidentiality
- ▶ ask about changes that may be made to confidentiality procedures (staff meetings are a good time for this)
- ▶ use the privacy principles to determine your actions.

People you may consider

The input of others involved in the child's care can provide a more complete picture of the child's situation and needs. People to consider include:

- ▶ the child, their parents and other family or community members
- ▶ referral agencies
- ▶ field workers, resource workers and early intervention service staff
- ▶ medical staff and specialists, such as paediatricians, cardiologists, psychiatrists, dermatologists, speech therapists, allergists, nutritionists and physiotherapists
- ▶ your service supervisor, coordinator or director
- ▶ school or integration aides and teachers
- ▶ other care providers.

Be sure that these consultations are respectful, relevant and purposeful.

1. How would you go about developing a holistic understanding of Molly's particular needs? Consider:
 - ▶ who you might discuss Molly's needs with
 - ▶ how you might collect data about Molly
 - ▶ how you might use the data to inform your actions.

2. Who would you contact to gain more information about Molly?

3. How might service policies and procedures apply to this situation?

Summary

- ▶ Barriers to learning are problems or situations that prevent children from accessing programs and make it difficult for children to play, concentrate and learn.
- ▶ You can identify barriers to learning by being aware of the resources in the organisation and what information or resources you need to access externally.
- ▶ To identify any barriers to learning, it is essential to observe the child in a range of situations.
- ▶ It is important to include the child's perceptions and insights into their situation.
- ▶ The input of others involved in the child's care provides a more complete picture of the child's situation and needs.
- ▶ Once you have combined your observations with other information you have gathered, you should be able to clearly set out the areas of concern.
- ▶ When you have gathered useful evidence, analyse the information and identify what changes are required to meet the needs of the child.



Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

4A Developing an inclusion plan

4B Adapting and reflecting on the plan

Developing a plan for support and inclusion

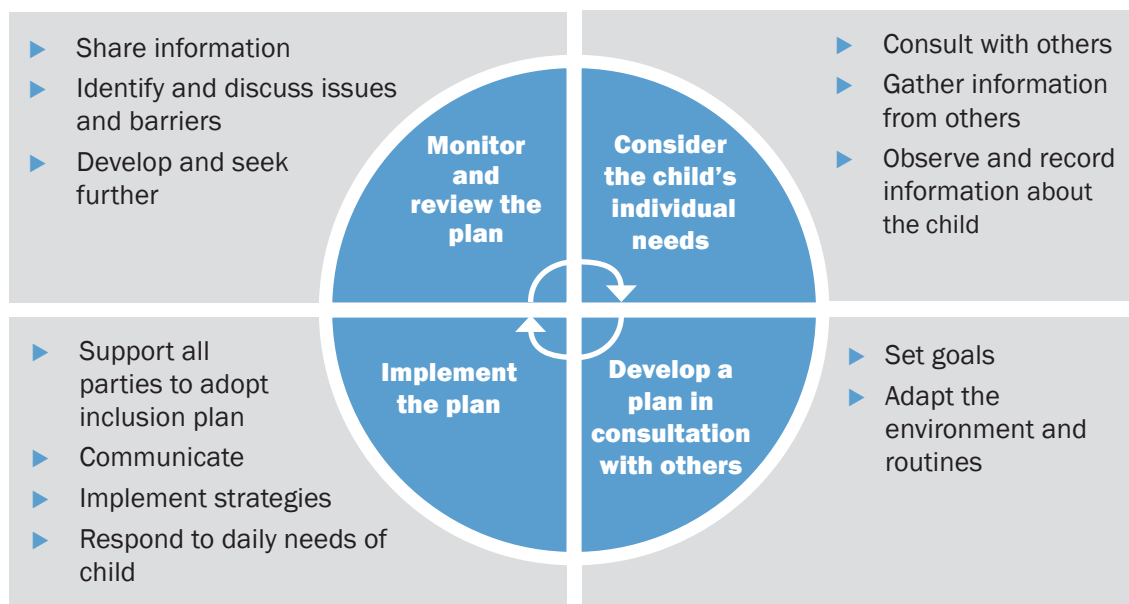
To ensure all additional support needs are met, it is wise to develop a plan for support and inclusion. This allows you to plan the way forward and take into account all aspects of the child's and family's needs. Catering for these within the plan makes it more effective and reduces the likelihood of unexpected issues occurring.

The additional support needs of some children are profound, meaning that without a plan of inclusion, they can be disadvantaged.

Development process

The process for developing this type of plan involves gathering information from a range of different sources through interviews, consultations, records and observations. All the information must be collated and organised so that it can be presented to others for consultation.

The development cycle of an inclusion plan may look similar to this.



Organisational policy and procedures need to be taken into account when developing a plan. If there are currently no policies or procedures, they must be developed.

An independent inclusion policy is not mandated; however, Element 6.2.2 of the NQS states: 'Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program'. This suggests that your service must demonstrate its commitment to full inclusion throughout its philosophy, policies and procedures.

Consultation process

When developing a plan for inclusion, it is valuable to consult a variety of people and services. To gain appropriate support, seek advice, interpret the child's behaviour and make decisions about your plan of action, it is essential that you include others involved with the child, such as:

- ▶ the child and their parents
- ▶ other family members and community members (where culturally appropriate)
- ▶ educators and other staff
- ▶ professionals involved in the child's or family's care
- ▶ referral agencies
- ▶ support groups.

Consultation with parents and the child is an essential part of developing an inclusion plan. This may involve an informal discussion, or consist of meetings and in-depth discussions with a range of people if the needs are more complex. The child's parents may be able to provide you with options for response, strategies you may not have considered or insights into things that happen outside of the service.

Each step might be an objective, depending on the child's skills.

The task analysis shows each step clearly. This enables you to prioritise skill development. The skills you see as most important or possible will be the ones you focus on with the child.

Example

Using a task analysis

Task analysis for brushing teeth

1. Pick up the toothbrush.
2. Wet the toothbrush (involves operating a tap).
3. Take the cap off the tube of toothpaste.
4. Put paste on the toothbrush (involves squeezing the tube).
5. Brush the outside of the bottom row of teeth (requires brush movement).
6. Brush the outside of the top row of teeth.
7. Brush the biting surface of the top row of teeth.
8. Brush the biting surface of the bottom row of teeth.
9. Brush the inside surface of the bottom row of teeth.
10. Brush the inside surface of the top row of teeth.
11. Spit (involves not swallowing toothpaste).
12. Rinse the brush.
13. Place the brush in its holder.
14. Grasp cup.
15. Fill cup with water.
16. Rinse teeth with water.
17. Spit.
18. Place cup down or in holder.
19. Wipe mouth on towel.
20. Screw cap back on tube of toothpaste.
21. Place toothpaste and toothbrush back in its place.

Setting the objectives

To set objectives, you must break down your goal into small, workable parts. To create objectives, prioritise and brainstorm.

Prioritise

Identify needs that are most important and prioritise these. When you prioritise, you may need to break down each step further.

Brainstorm

Identify each part of the goal by identifying where the child is now and where you eventually want the child to be. Ask yourself what steps the child will need to take to move from their current situation to meet the goal. The task analysis is useful here.

After prioritising and brainstorming, you will be able to select the objectives that you feel can be achieved within a short space of time. These objectives are the ones you would insert into your first inclusion plan. Further objectives can be added as you review the plan.

Example

Considering individual children's needs

Gregory, an educator, is at the sandpit with three children when they find an insect. He responds to the children's interest, but also considers the additional support needs of two of the children. Gregory:

- ▶ responds enthusiastically
- ▶ asks open questions
- ▶ offers information
- ▶ links with children's current knowledge
- ▶ discusses how another child kept stick insects at home.

Gregory's adaptations for each child are presented in the following table.

Child	Strategies for adaptation
Child one High intelligence level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Added new ideas and investigations ▶ Involved her in creating an investigation area ▶ Provided access to web pages relating to specific bugs ▶ Developed a chart of insect types using scientific names
Child two Little use of limbs and poor speech, but clear understanding of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Moved him closer to the insect so he could see it ▶ Placed the insect on his hand (after asking if this was okay) ▶ Spoke words related to the insect clearly and slowly (such as 'legs', 'head', 'antenna')

Practice task 9

1. Review a service orientation policy and procedures. Summarise the points that refer to the support provided for children with additional support needs. Do you think any of these points could be expanded on? Why or why not?

5B Adopting inclusive attitudes and practices

Wherever possible, you should always model inclusive attitudes and practices to encourage others to do the same. Ensure that you involve families in any plans you make and in any successes, developments and discussions.

To help others accept and value difference, try to encourage them by presenting an attitude and actions that:

- ▶ acknowledge difference; recognise it, talk about it and show an understanding of it
- ▶ demonstrate that being different should not be embarrassing; it should be celebrated, shared, fun and exciting.



Your communication should always be non-judgmental, open, honest and clear. By listening, taking concerns seriously and working together to develop strategies and address concerns, you can support others to improve their inclusive practices. The principles of your inclusive practice should consider the needs of others, and work towards their inclusion in the team's shared goals.

Some educators feel uncomfortable with inclusion because they are placed in situations they are not prepared for or do not fully understand. If this is the case, offer them support so they do not feel embarrassed or incompetent.

It takes a team of people to successfully implement an inclusion plan. It is your role to effectively communicate with and support the team to achieve the best possible outcome for the child.

Supporting educators

Educators of children with additional support needs must be provided with clear directions about:

- ▶ the reasons or rationale for any inclusion plan
- ▶ the limits and guidelines in the plan and the strategies to implement
- ▶ the roles they play in the plan
- ▶ how you can support each other, the child and their parents.

This information is essential if educators are to effectively and consistently carry out the strategies outlined in the inclusion plan.

By providing options for training (whether through support from you, another person in your service or external training opportunities), you ensure the educators on the support team are well prepared, and understand how and why to participate.

There will be situations that some educators can handle easily by themselves and others they may find difficult and need help with. In some circumstances educators may need time away from the child to recharge, or to gather their thoughts. Ensure the other educators are aware this is acceptable and that they are not expected to manage situations with no support.

Learning checkpoint 5

Implementing strategies to meet the child's additional needs

Part A

Read the case study, then complete the questions that follow.

Case study

You work with a group of school-age children and are supported by two other educators. As the group leader, you are responsible for developing the plans for the children and sharing these with the other educators.

Today you have been working with Denise, who has a physical disability. Denise is learning to move her body from one place to another. Denise is very strong-willed and is determined to reach her next milestone. She has almost succeeded in her task and although she needs occasional breaks, she seems to be enjoying the challenge. You are tired, however, and at times you feel frustrated.

You receive a report from a specialist. The report includes several suggested goals and objectives to help with Denise's additional needs.

1. What would your next step be in relation to working with Denise to help her meet her next milestone? Consider the following:
 - ▶ The child's needs
 - ▶ Your needs
 - ▶ The success of the strategy
 - ▶ The role of others
 - ▶ The level of support provided for the child

Further questions that relate to children's specific needs

- ▶ Did the child face any handicap?
- ▶ Did the strategy cause any side effects?
- ▶ Did the child participate to their full potential?
- ▶ Were there any barriers or interruptions to participation?
- ▶ Should there be modifications to this activity to allow for greater participation?
- ▶ Was the experience presented in a way that represents your value of difference?
- ▶ Did the experience provide enough challenge and risk-taking for this child?
- ▶ Are there more appropriate communication methods that could be used?
- ▶ Did the experience highlight a need for additional support for the child, yourself or others?
- ▶ Could others have been involved more effectively?

Many of your strategies will be evaluated, recorded and attached to your inclusion plan. Other evaluations may be linked to a regular evaluation strategy, such as a planning or curriculum format. One way to record evaluations is to establish a diary or communication book. The benefit of this recording method is that content can remain confidential. If kept in the child's bag, you and the parent can add information to this diary and share successes, ask questions, challenge ideas and voice concerns. This method can integrate both the home and service environments and allow you to compare the child's behaviour.

Identifying and responding to barriers as the strategies are implemented

As you continue to monitor and evaluate the inclusion program, further issues and barriers may arise. Most of these are focused on why the inclusion program is not working. To identify these barriers, ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ Did I support and train other educators enough to implement the plan?
- ▶ Did I gain further information about the child's needs or background?
- ▶ Were the objectives achievable?
- ▶ Were the strategies appropriate and successful?
- ▶ Were there any issues or successes experienced in regard to the resources, environment and program?
- ▶ Were the child and parents successfully involved?



Reasons that an inclusion plan is not working may be obvious. Think about the issues outlined in the following table and how others may be able to support you to overcome these problems.