Case Study → Community → Theory → Critical Reflection → Complete QIP

Educators

Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.

A service reviewed what the NQF Guide said about element 3.2.1 and broke it down to understand educators build inclusive environments by:

- organising and adapting indoor and outdoor spaces to support each child's interests, preferences, self-confidence and participation
- using and arranging furniture, equipment and materials in multiple ways to support children's engagement with the built and natural environment.

The word inclusive means **'not excluding any section or any party involved in something.'**

Action from critical reflection – identified practice meeting the element description.

We've set up several quiet and private play spaces inside and outside which children use when they want some 'time out' from other children or direct adult supervision. For example, there's a small, secluded space behind the mirror in our outdoor environment, as well as several spaces nestled in grassy areas. Inside children have used cushions and sheets to make a cubby, and there is a rocket constructed out of boxes. We find these spaces help some children to calm down and regulate their behaviour, especially for our little boy who has autism. He has somewhere to go or stay when he's not feeling comfortable. We've also built an edible garden with a lot of help from several families. There's so much learning that comes from it, for example about healthy eating, life cycles

and caring for the environment, and all children, including our child with autism, love exploring the different tastes, textures and smells in the garden.

Myths, facts, and solutions for creating inclusive spaces for children with autism and cerebral palsy.

Myth	Fact	Spaces
Children with autism can't feel emotions.	Children with autism can feel lots of emotions, and often these are stronger than usual. However, they may find it hard to express emotions, or only communicate how they're feeling when they feel comfortable.	Find out what makes each child with autism feel comfortable and adjust the environment eg consider colour, brightness, temperature, noise levels, textures, smell. Set up small spaces in the indoor and outdoor environment, and use these to help a child integrate into the group.
Children with autism can't talk properly.	Children with autism can have impaired language development. The degree of impairment can vary from minor to severe.	Include lots of visual learning supports in all learning spaces eg put words with pictures, take photos of places and people, colour code routines and instructions, use body movements and different voice tones, tell a social story using child or their favourite character.

Myth	Fact	Spaces
Cerebral Palsy gets worse over time.	Cerebral palsy does not get worse as people age, but the symptoms may become more noticeable eg their muscles may get stiffer. Treatments and strategies to manage the condition can help eg a child's movements can be improved by practising motor skills.	Include lots of gross and fine motor physical activities in play spaces, but remember child may tire easily. Source modified sporting equipment.

Myth	Fact	Spaces
Children with cerebral palsy can't move around.	Children with cerebral palsy are mobile. Some may use splints, sticks, wheelchairs etc to move around. They may have trouble making sense of information they see eg move around obstacles, judge size and shape of objects.	Reflect on placement and type of equipment, furniture etc. Discuss layouts with children and families. Ensure access to activities etc is clear for children using walking frames etc. It may help to place activities on coloured place mats. Instal ramps, rails to rooms etc if required. Ensure child who needs help to move is not left at same activity or location for more than 20 – 30 minutes.
Children with cerebral palsy can't commun-icate.	One in four children can't communicate using speech because their mouth and tongue muscles are affected. But there are many ways to communicate eg sign language, communication boards and electronic devices.	Make communication aids available in all play spaces, both indoor and outdoor.

Theory

In the 1960's the perception of a disability moved from the medical model of a deficit and personal tragedy to a social responsibility model looking at the way society does or does not create an environment allowing all people to fully participate.

Researchers started to investigate and identify barriers and areas that were inaccessible to people living with a disability. This research led to making sure people who needed to use a wheelchair had access to buildings, transport and public spaces.

Further research has identified inappropriate, hurtful or hostile behaviour and language that has a negative impact on a person's sense of self. This has led to more inclusive language that requires a 'first person' concept. For example, 'Tyler with autism'. The child is first, then the autism, rather than 'the autistic child.'

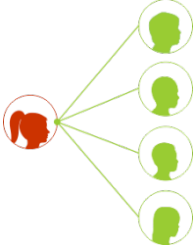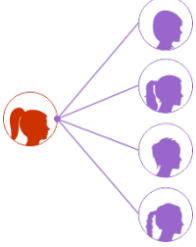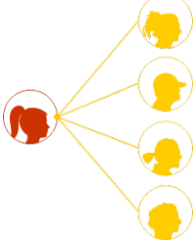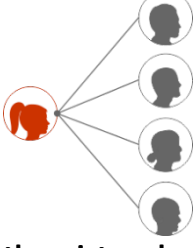What are you doing well in relation to creating inclusive indoor and outdoor environments?

Where can you improve?

The EYLF and MTOP says "Critical reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives." Pick one of the following reflection points to complete the table below:
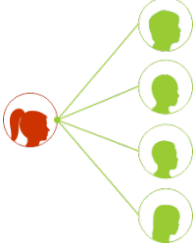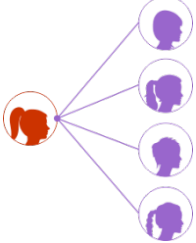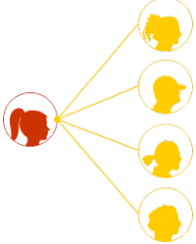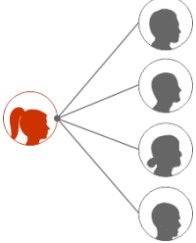
- Are there spaces in our environment that we can adapt to better meet children's need/interests (included in example below and in QIP Improvement example)?
- Do our indoor and outdoor spaces give children the security they need to freely participate in activities and experiences?
- Can we improve the way we support children to move between indoor and outdoor environments?

Critically reflect through the eyes of:	Write your critical reflection below	What changes did you or will you make because of the reflection?
a child	I want to play without the other kids running around, banging into me, and wrecking my stuff.	The EL discussed the playground issue with the NS and raised the possibility of creating a couple of separate, self-contained spaces in the outdoor environment which would help engage children for longer periods of time..
an educator	It's so exhausting. All I ever seem to do is try and stop children running around aimlessly outside and upsetting the children who are involved in an activity. And there's heaps more incidents of children getting hurt eg banging heads than there should be.	The EL asked all Room/Group leaders to brainstorm the possibilities eg Miss Lizzie said at one centre she saw separate areas with a mirror, rocks to climb, and challenging climbing structures.
your families	Educators don't seem to be able to control children when they're playing outside. It looks like random chaos is going on!	Some were separated with high walls children couldn't see over and this helped them focus on their play.

The NS agreed to follow these ideas up with the AP and consider families and community organisations that may be able to help. |
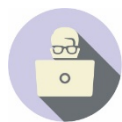| theorist and current research | A Pattern Language by Christopher Alexander (1977) describes activity pockets as a small and partly closed area located on the edge of spaces used for public gatherings. They sit between paths and protrude forward into open space and contain activities that create interest and cause people to pause, become curious, then enter the space. | |

The EYLF and MTOP says "Critical reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives." Pick one of the following reflection points to complete the table below:

- Are there spaces in our environment that we can adapt to better meet children's need/interests (included in example below and in QIP Improvement example)?
- Do our indoor and outdoor spaces give children the security they need to freely participate in activities and experiences?
- Can we improve the way we support children to move between indoor and outdoor environments?

Critically reflect through the eyes of:	Write your critical reflection below	What changes did you or will you make because of the reflection?
a child		
an educator		
your families		
theorist and current research		

Complete your QIP

The information you write below can go directly into your QIP or Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) (NSW ONLY)
Instructions

For a **MEETING** QIP and Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)	For **Exceeding** the QIP and Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)
Please give a recent example of how you've organised indoor or outdoor spaces to meet children's interests or ideas.	*Please explain how your approach to inclusive environments reflects your service Philosophy. (Used for QIP Strength example).*
Please give a recent example of how you've adapted the environment to encourage a child/group of children to participate.	*Please give an example of a team reflection about improving the use of space, equipment and resources to promote inclusion. (included in QIP example)*
Please give an example of the way you use indoor or outdoor spaces to promote positive relationships.	*Please give an example of how you and your team have worked with families or the community to foster an inclusive and flexible learning environment. (included in QIP example)*
If you cannot answer these questions above the you are not meeting. This means you need to create an improvement plan and make changes to your practice	If you cannot answer these questions above the you are not exceeding. This means you need to create an improvement plan and make changes to your practice

Week 15, 24 May - 28 May 2021- 3.2.1 Inclusive Environment

Why are you doing the checklist?

The practices identified in the checklist are what the assessor needs to see you do so they can check you're 'meeting the NQS.' If you embed all the things in the checklist, then you are meeting the Element 3.2.1. If there's something on the checklist that you're not doing, then you need to either adjust your practice to do it, or ask for help and training to do what's on the checklist ie work with your educational leader or room leader who should teach/coach you how to do it.

Name Educator 1	
Name Educator 2	
Name Educator 3	
Name Educator 4	
Name Educator 5	

The checklist keys to use.

E = **Embedded** I do that **ALL** the time
K = I **know** I need to do that, but I don't do it all the time
T = Please **teach** me how to do it or improve my understanding of why I need to do it.

Practices	ED1	ED2	ED3	ED4	ED5
Do you set up and adapt indoor and outdoor environments to meet the ages, interests and abilities of all children in the group?					
Do you adapt environments and resources where required to ensure each child can successfully participate?					
Do you reorganise the indoor and outdoor environment (with children's help where possible) to implement children's ideas or stimulate their interest/engagement?					
Do you design environments and plan activities which encourage each child to explore, investigate, take risks, solve problems, connect with nature and be creative?					
Do you plan a mix of large and small group activities so children are provided with different opportunities to engage with and collaborate with peers?					
Do you organise activities in indoor/outdoor spaces where children won't be interrupted eg by adults or other children moving through the space?					
Do you provide opportunities for children to engage in social or solitary play according to their individual needs/preferences?					
Do you make sure children can access most resources without adult help?					
Do you monitor noise levels and implement strategies to reduce noise if needed eg room rules?					
Do you make sure indoor/outdoor spaces used for routines like nappy changing, resting and eating are organised in ways that promote positive interactions?					
Do the make sure indoor and outdoor environments look attractive (would you be happy playing or relaxing in them)?					
Do you establish close working relationships with professionals and families to support the inclusion of all children, including those with additional needs?					