

## STaR Childcare Placement and Support Program

The STaR Childcare Support Program (STaR Program) is modelled on a successful early intervention program that was developed over a 10-year period by Dr Coral Kemp and her team at Macquarie University Special Education Centre. It has been operating within community childcare centres for more than 12 years. Highly qualified special educators provide training for staff in participating childcare centres to assist them to support and include up to 6 children aged 0-5 years who have disabilities or developmental delay. Families are supported according to need, especially in the transition to school.

### Where does the STaR Program operate?

- In affiliated mainstream childcare centres in the north-western and western areas of Sydney

### What does the STaR Program offer to families of children with disabilities/developmental delay?

The STaR Program

- supports access to appropriate childcare placement, which provides families with increased choices and opportunities for life and work
- supports children to achieve optimal development within everyday play and routines
- trains and supports childcare educators to develop and implement appropriate individualised programs and activities based on
  - ongoing assessment of the child's current functioning within the childcare centre across all areas of development
  - the family's priorities and the goals of therapists
- provides formal and informal parent discussions/education, respite, and the opportunity to connect with other families of children with disabilities
- prepares children and their families for the transition to school
- offers the opportunity for siblings to attend the same childcare setting

In addition the STaR Association may provide opportunities to participate in Preparation for School and Transition to School programs in the year prior to school.

### Criteria for entry to the STaR Program

Children can be referred to the STaR Program if the child is aged 0-5 years old and has a documented disability or developmental delay.

Children will then be selected for the program based on

- the centre's ability to cater for the child's individual needs
- the level of support required
- the mix of disabilities within the group at that centre.
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Parents/carers of children enrolled in the STaR Program need to

- supply documentation required for funding purposes
- sign permission for an application for Intervention Support Program (ISP) funding
- sign the parental agreement (which includes research participation)
- pay the usual childcare fees for enrolment at the childcare centre
- pay a minimal fee on acceptance of an offer of placement in the Program.

The STaR Childcare Placement and Support Program receives some funding from the Intervention Support Program administered by the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC).

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