

## STaR Project Information Sheet for Families

What is the STaR Project?

The STaR Project is jointly managed by Access Macquarie Limited (ACCESS MQ) and the STaR Association. It is modelled on an early intervention program that operated at Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC) for ten years and then as a three-year pilot project within a childcare centre at Meadowbank.

The Project is funded through the Australian government's "Early Childhood – Invest To Grow" initiative with a contribution from the Integration Support Program, administered by the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET).

The Project provides an educational service to participating childcare centres to assist them to support children with disabilities/developmental delays. Parents/carers are thereby given increased life/work choices and opportunities with the knowledge that their child is receiving an appropriate education. Childcare staff employed by participating centres are trained and supported in developing and implementing appropriate programs and activities for children with disabilities/developmental delays. This training and support is provided by highly qualified early intervention staff linked to Macquarie University.

The STaR Project supports:

1. childcare centres that have enrolled a small group of children with disabilities,
2. children, 0 to 5 years, with diagnosed disabilities/developmental delays,
3. families of the children with disabilities/developmental delays.

What is the STaR Model?

The STaR Model was developed by Dr Coral Kemp and her team at MUSEC, following 12 years of research. The Model provides individualised education programs for children, 0-5 years with disabilities/developmental delays, in inclusive early childhood settings.

What does the STaR Model aim to achieve?

The STaR Model aims to:

- support children with disabilities achieve optimal development in inclusive early childhood settings and to support their families through the provision of education and social support;
- train and support childcare centre staff in developing and implementing appropriate programs and activities for children with disabilities/developmental delays;
- support the families of children with disabilities/developmental delays through the provision of education, respite, and the opportunity to access social support from other families of children with disabilities/developmental delays;
- collaborate with other early intervention services that the child is receiving and to implement appropriate objectives within the daily routines and activities of the centre;
- prepare children with disabilities and their families for the child's transition to school.

Where does the STaR Model operate?

The STaR Model operates in participating childcare centres across the Sydney metropolitan area.

What does the STaR Model offer?

The STaR Model offers:

- an individual assessment of the child's current functioning within the childcare centre across all areas of development, i.e., fine and gross motor skills, self help skills, cognitive skills, social-communication skills and social skills;
- an individual education plan based on the centre assessment, therapists' goals and the family's priorities;
- support and training for the childcare centre staff in implementing the child's program within the daily routines and activities of the childcare centre;
- ongoing assessment and evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the program and to set new objectives;
- formal and informal parent discussions/education;
- collaboration with other early intervention services the child is receiving; and
- a focus on preparation for school in the year before the child commences school.

The Association may additionally provide opportunities to participate in:

- early academic programs focusing on literacy and numeracy skills in the year prior to school; and
- a transition program in preparation for school

Criteria for entry to the STaR Project

#### Children

Children can be referred to the Project if the child is 0-5 years old with a documented disability/developmental delay.

Children will then be selected for the STaR Project based on:

- the centre's ability to cater for the child's individual needs,
- the level of support required, and
- the mix of disabilities within the group at that centre.

#### Parents and Families

Parents and families of children enrolled in the STaR Project need to:

- supply documentation required for funding purposes;
- sign permission for application for Intervention Support (ISP) funding;
- sign the research agreement
- sign the parental agreement;
- pay the childcare fees applicable for their child's enrolment at the childcare centre; and
- pay a minimal fee on acceptance of an offer of placement in the Project.

For more information contact:

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