

The Association for Children with Disability is an advocacy organisation that operates statewide in Tasmania. The focus of our advocacy is families who have a child or children with disability. Within the ECEC sector, the matters that families approach us for assistance and advocacy include the following:

- Their child/ren is not accepted into a childcare centre on the grounds that the centre is unable to access sufficient IPSP funding to support the child in the centre adequately.
- The ECEC is unable to employ extra staff as the rate of the IPSP funding is lower than what the centre requires to pay the extra staff person.
- Their child/ren cannot be supported in the centre for more than 5 hours because the IPSP funding to the centre only covers 5 hours.
- For centres who are welcoming of all children, and are fully inclusive in both attitude and values, funding issues do not present a significant barrier; however where the attitude and values of each individual staff member of a centre are resistant and rejecting of inclusive practices, funding is utilised as a barrier.
- We have experienced that exclusion of a child with a disability may sometimes be justified on grounds of the safety of staff and other children; even in instances when the risk is very low. In such instances the ECEC will misuse, either deliberately or through a lack of understanding, existing centre policies.
- In our experience exclusion often occurs because centre staff either do not know, or do not understand the policies of their centre.
- Staff lack knowledge and skills on how to include children who have differing movement, cognitive, and communication needs.
- Staff lack training and knowledge and understanding of disability in general, as well as of specific disabilities; and even where they do have this training they are unable, or lack the confidence and support from their staffing team to apply and implement their knowledge and skill.
- ACD has recently partnered with TAFE Tasmania to create and deliver the Cert III and IV Children's Services (CHCEC30113) certificates and the Cert III in Disability work (CHC30408) with embedded information on disability and child development relevant to each qualification embedded in the core and elective units of each. It is anticipated that these qualifications will significantly improve attitudes, knowledge, skills and confidence of people working in the ECEC environment and also for disability workers who work with children.

Association for Children with Disability Tas Inc.