

Participation policy

Purpose

This policy explains how RIDBC Services staff assist clients to be included and participate in community life in ways that are meaningful to them.

Scope

This policy applies to all Services Staff.

Policy

RIDBC supports and respects the rights of clients to participate and be actively included in the community and support networks activities in the way they choose. We aim to develop connections with the broader community to promote opportunities and options for clients to engage in community activities and develop social relationships with other members of the community who share their interests.

Staff are encouraged to develop and maintain links with other community service providers and regularly participate in professional and inter-agency associations and community engagement activities.

Staff and volunteers are given training to help them understand, respect and act in the interests of clients. Services staff work with clients and support them to:

- develop and maintain skills and attitudes that promote their independence
- make decisions about how they connect with their chosen community and activities
- access appropriate community activities through collaborative planning and coordination of interagency service provision; and if requested, advocate on behalf of clients seeking services
- utilise local community resources and include these resources in individual program objectives to achieve their goals and reduce barriers to participation

Policy

- develop links with programs for people from a diverse background, including people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and as appropriate adapt service delivery practices to more effectively meet the needs of these communities.

RIDBC requests feedback from clients to understand their needs in accessing and participating in their chosen community and activities.

In early childhood services we recognise that the family has central importance for child development, therefore:

- we encourage active involvement of client's family and support networks
- we provide family-centred supports in a culturally inclusive and responsive way
- we build on the strengths of the client and their family and support networks
- we provide a natural setting for services where possible
- we set functional outcomes which help the client participate in their family and community life in an inclusive and meaningful way, including participation in daily routines.

Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Definition
Client	Where relevant the term 'client' includes the client's family or carer.