
Being and Creating Community: Mainstream early childhood services as sites for social inclusion and civic engagement

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For over a century SDN Children's Services, a not-for-profit organisation, has provided a range of services for children, families and communities, many of whom are marginalised. Each of these services has become a vibrant community of learners and site for meaningful engagement and involvement of children and families. The common elements of these services have been identified and conceptualised into SDN's Child and Family Learning Framework and Model of Integrated Services.

In this presentation we describe the SDN framework and model and then identify and discuss the key components that have been critical to the success of our services. We then provide an example of how early childhood education and care contributes to social inclusion and civic engagement. In particular, we describe how children within our Riverwood Child and Family Learning Centre are actively engaged in community life.