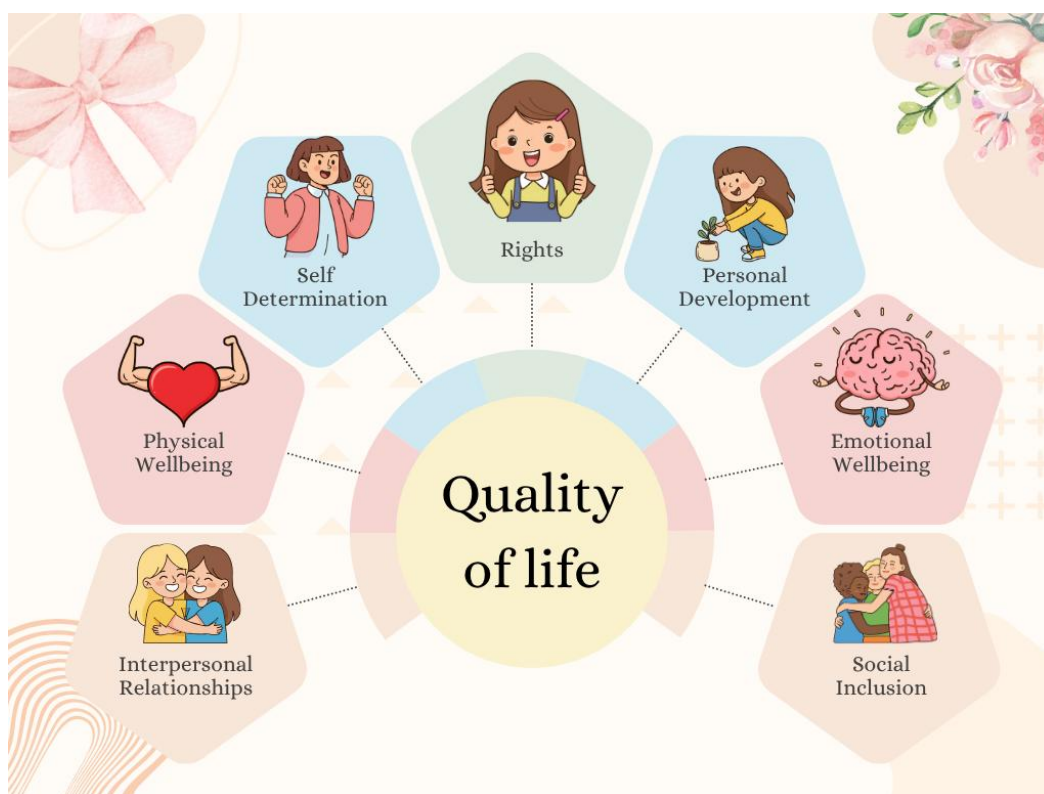


Quality of Life

Darling Point Special School emphasises life quality in all aspects of school life. The School Curriculum Framework is mapped against the ACARA version 9 curriculum including the learning areas guided by the Queensland Department of Education Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework, 2023. As well as the academic learning areas, the general capabilities, notably Personal and Social Capabilities and the Queensland Respectful Relationships Curriculum, are strongly emphasised. Planning and teaching take note of ways to maximise student learning outcomes and life quality, drawing on the research of Schalock (2012) as well as seminal curriculum and teaching research.

Life quality is the essence of PBS – through it, students are self-determining and confident. They enjoy and become equipped to guide their own life of choice, not of chance. Without it, they are at the mercy of others, disempowered and not supported to make or communicate informed choices. The following table outlines the domains that contribute to life quality as they inform the application of curriculum and teaching.

Life Quality Domains	What does this look like?
Self Determination	Autonomy, choice, decisions, personal context, personal direction, personal goal setting
Social Inclusion	Acceptance, participation, skills, supports, school environment, work environment, community activities, roles, volunteering, activities, residential options as adults
Material Well-being	Ownerships, financial security, food, employment, possessions, social economic status
Personal Development	Achievement, education, skills, fulfilment, personal competence
Emotional Well-being	Happiness, freedom from stress, well-being, fun, self-concept, contentment, spirituality
Interpersonal Relationships	Friendships, relationships, choice of support people, personal life pathway options
Physical Well-being	Health, nutrition, recreation, mobility, healthcare, safety, activities of daily living
Rights	Dignity, privacy, presence, access, due process, ownership, knowledge of rights and responsibilities, civic responsibilities



Role Play

Here is a detailed explanation of role play as a teaching strategy, its diverse uses in special school contexts (classroom, playground, and work preparation), and the research evidence supporting its efficacy.

What is Role Play?

Role play is a teaching and learning strategy in which students act out characters or situations to explore behaviours, concepts, emotions, or social dynamics. In special education, role play is tailored to meet students' communication levels, cognitive abilities, and sensory needs, allowing them to rehearse real-life scenarios in a structured, supportive environment.

Role play involves:

- Imitation of real or imagined scenarios
- Structured or improvised scripts
- Guided facilitation by staff
- Use of visuals, props, AAC, and other supports as needed

Uses of Role Play in Special School Contexts

1. In the Classroom

Purposes:

- Language and communication development: Practising conversations, asking questions, turn-taking
- Social understanding: Exploring empathy, emotions, and perspective-taking
- Curriculum links: Acting out scenes in English, History, or Health units

Examples:

- Enacting a story from a book (e.g., *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*)
- Pretending to be different community helpers in HASS
- Role-playing a shopping trip to practice money concepts

Supports:

- Visual scripts, storyboards, role badges, communication devices

2. In the Playground

Purposes:

- Rehearsing peer interaction: Sharing, asking to join in, taking turns
- Conflict resolution: Practising calm responses to teasing, accidents, or frustration
- Social games: Developing structured play routines (e.g., playing 'schools' or 'shops')

Examples:

- Staff models asking: "Can I play with you?" and students take turns role-playing the exchange
- Role play with puppets to act out common playground challenges

Supports:

- Social stories turned into acted scenarios, peer partners, key word signs

3. In Work Preparation and Life Skills

Purposes:

- Job-readiness: Practising interviews, customer service, workplace etiquette
- Travel training: Role-playing getting on a bus, buying a ticket, asking for help
- Daily routines: Practising meal preparation, making appointments, greeting staff

Examples:

- Mock café setup where students take orders, prepare food, and handle 'money'
- Practising workplace safety protocols or greetings to supervisors

Supports:

- Real-life props (e.g., uniforms, till), visual schedules, peer modelling

Research Evidence Supporting Role Play

1. Social and Communication Skills

Bellini, S. (2007): Meta-analysis found that role play combined with video modelling improved social skills in students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

O'Connor et al. (2014): Role play and social scripts increased verbal interactions and peer engagement in students with intellectual disability.

2. Behavioural and Emotional Regulation

Gray (2000): Introduced Social Stories and role play together to help students rehearse appropriate behaviour in social situations, reducing anxiety and challenging behaviours.

Simpson, R. (2005): Role play enhanced self-regulation in students with emotional and behavioural disorders.

3. Functional and Vocational Skills

Cihak et al. (2010): Using role play and video prompting improved job task performance in young adults with developmental disabilities.

Beyer & Kaehne (2010): Identified role play and simulated work environments as effective in preparing students with disabilities for employment pathways.

4. Engagement and Motivation

UNESCO (2009) and Tomlinson (2014): Role play promotes active learning, differentiated instruction, and inclusion across diverse learners by offering accessible, embodied engagement.

Summary of Benefits

Benefit	Impact
Increases social communication	Builds turn-taking, eye contact, functional language
Prepares for real-life interactions	Reduces anxiety through rehearsal
Enhances cognitive flexibility	Allows exploration of different perspectives
Improves behavioural understanding	Rehearses appropriate responses and consequences
Builds confidence and engagement	Provides a safe space for risk-taking and learning
Encourages teamwork and empathy	Promotes inclusion and positive peer interaction

Role Play Activity Template

For Special School Classrooms (Prep to Senior)

1. Role Play Overview

Field	Description
Topic/Scenario	e.g., Asking for help, going to the shop, saying hello
Target Skill(s)	Communication / Social / Functional / Emotional / Academic
Curriculum Link	e.g., Personal & Social Capability / HASS / English
Student Group	e.g., Group A (Years 4–6, ICP Levels 1–2)
Setting	Classroom / Playground / Work Skills / Life Skills Area

1. Learning Intention & Success Criteria

Field	Example Entry
Learning Intention	"We are learning to greet someone politely using AAC or speech."
Success Criteria	☒ I can look at the person. ☒ I can say "hello" or press it on my device.

3. Roles

Character	Who Will Play It?	Supports Required
Customer	Student A	Visual prompt card
Shop Assistant	Staff / Peer model	AAC device / script
Peer Observer	Student B	'Thumbs up/down' visual card

Tip: Use photos of roles or lanyard badges with symbols to help students stay in role.

4. Step-by-Step Script (or Sequence)

Step	Dialogue or Action	Visual or Support Tool
1	Walk up to the shop assistant	Visual of walking person
2	Say "hello" or press the greeting button	Symbol card / AAC device
3	Ask for item (e.g. "Can I have chips?")	Sentence strip / PODD page
4	Exchange money	Toy money / gesture prompt
5	Say "thank you"	Thank you card / key word sign

5. Differentiation & Adjustments

Student	Adjustment
Student C	Use two-step visual strip instead of full script
Student D	Peer model stands beside and echoes sentence
Student E	Role play using figurines first before acting in person

6. Warm-up Activity (Pre-teach Concepts)

Watch a video of someone doing the task
 Read a social story
 Model the steps using puppets
 Practice key phrases or signs as a group

7. Observation & Reflection Checklist

Student Name	Used Greeting	Stayed in Role	Used Prompt	Needed Support	Comment
	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Use smiley face stamps, stickers, or tokens as feedback.

8. Follow-up Activities

Draw or choose pictures showing what happened
 Sequence cards of the role play
 Practice the same role play in a real-life setting (e.g., classroom tuckshop)
 Discuss: "What went well? What can we try next time?"

Printable Resources You Can Add:

Blank character cards (with Velcro space for student photo or symbol)
 Editable sentence starters (e.g., "I would like ____ please.")
 Picture prompt sequences
 Feedback visuals (thumbs up/down, star rating)

Role Play Activity Template – Responding to Teasing

Special School Context – Social & Emotional Learning

1. Role Play Overview

Field	Description
Topic/Scenario	Responding to teasing or unkind words
Target Skill(s)	Emotional regulation, social problem-solving, safe responses
Curriculum Link	Personal & Social Capability / Health & Physical Education
Student Group	Middle Years Group (Ages 10–14, ICP Level 1–2, GIL focus)
Setting	Classroom mat area → Playground or Life Skills Room

2. Learning Intention & Success Criteria

Field	Example Entry
Learning Intention	"We are learning how to stay safe and calm when someone says something unkind."

Field	Example Entry
	✓ I can use a safe response.
Success Criteria	✓ I can ask an adult for help.
	✓ I can walk away.

3. Roles

Character	Who Will Play It?	Supports Required
Student Being Teased	Student A	Visual response cards / calming strategy card
Teasing Peer (pretend)	Staff or trusted peer	Scripted teasing line (mild) / prompt cards
Bystander	Student B or C	Symbol for “get help” / peer model
Supportive Adult	Teacher or TA	Lanyard or role label

4. Step-by-Step Script (or Sequence)

Step	Dialogue or Action	Visual or Support Tool
1	Peer says: “You’re bad at this game!”	Scripted card with teasing phrase (staff only)
2	Student takes a deep breath	Breathing card / calming strategy card
3	Student uses a safe response: “Please stop” OR “That’s not kind”	Symbol strip or PODD page
4	Student walks away OR goes to teacher	Walk-away symbol / adult photo prompt
5	Bystander gets help or checks on peer	Peer holds “Are you OK?” card or thumbs up/down

5. Differentiation & Adjustments

Student	Adjustment
Student A	Practices with puppets before acting in role
Student B	Uses single-button AAC device programmed with “Please stop.”
Student C	Acts as observer with task: “Who made a good choice? What did they do?”

6. Warm-up Activity (Pre-teach Concepts)

- Social story: “When Someone Is Unkind”
- Circle time discussion: What is teasing? What can I do?
- Calm strategy practice (e.g., balloon breathing)
- Model the role play with staff before students join

7. Observation & Reflection Checklist

Student Name	Used Calming Strategy	Used Safe Response	Asked for Help	Walked Away	Comment
	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	

8. Follow-up Activities

Draw how the student felt before and after the role play
Sort pictures into “safe” and “unsafe” responses
Rehearse using AAC or PODD only (no voice)
Use real playground setting next session to transfer skill
Send home social story for family to reinforce

Resources to Print & Prepare

Teasing scenario prompt cards (for staff use)
Response choice board: “Walk away”, “Please stop”, “Get help”
Emotion visuals: 😡 😞 😊 😊
Role tags or headbands
Laminated calming strategy card (e.g., breathe, count, squeeze)

Data sheet with tick boxes for support team