

Background

As outlined in the National Quality Standard, the Early Years Learning Framework and in My Time, Our Place, the education and care needs of children cannot be met without effective partnerships between the Service and its families. Regular and clear communications are vital in developing and maintaining effective partnerships.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the Service's commitment to partnerships between the Service and families and the many avenues of communication in place to sustain these partnerships.

Strategies and practices

- The Service is committed to working in partnerships with families to best meet the education and care needs of the children. This commitment is communicated to parents at enrolment and during orientation, as is the belief that effective partnerships can only be achieved when information is exchanged regularly and in simple terms. QA 6.1, QA 6.1.1
- The Service's enrolment and orientation processes are designed to be the beginning of the partnership. Parents are asked to provide as much information as possible about their child and the family background (e.g. cultural, religious, food preferences), and are provided with detailed verbal and written information about the Service and its practices. Refer to the Service's *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*. QA 6.1, QA 6.1.2
- During enrolment and orientation, parents are asked about their preferred way of receiving information from the Service and how best for them to communicate with the Service. QA 6.1.2
- The Service uses many avenues to exchange information with families. These include:
 - Face to face
 - Monthly newsletter
 - Communication books
 - Notice boards
 - Parent-educator meetings
 - Suggestion box
 - Surveys and questionnaires
 - Emails
 - Website. QA 6.1.2, 6.1.3
- Information about community resources and support agencies in the local community is provided to parents to support parenting and family wellbeing. QA 6.1.3
- The Service accesses translation services for non-English speaking families. QA 6.2.2
- The Service uses a wide variety of means for parents to contribute to the program, and document how their contributions have been used in the program. Refer to the Service's *Educational Program Policy*. The means include:

Interactions with Families

- Family and Child Information Summary
 - Communication and Needs Survey
 - Interest / Favourite Activity Form
 - Communication Books (Room and Individual Child)
 - Family Photo Observation
 - Family Frolic
 - Digby's Day Out
 - Provision for parent's comments on the Daily Program, Individual Child's Records, Learning Stories and Child's Learning Summary Sheet
 - Catching Family Input
 - Family Resource Web. QA 1.1.2, QA 6.1.2, QA 6.2.1
- Parents are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have about any aspect of the Service's operations. Refer to the Service's *Grievance and Complaints Policy*. QA 7.1.2
 - Information about children's wellbeing is routinely communicated to parents (e.g. illness or injuries, food and nutrition intake, sleep/rest times, nappy changes). QA 2.1.1
 - The Service's Policies and Procedures are reviewed annually. Parents are actively encouraged to be part of the review and to suggest any changes they consider necessary. They are provided with written feedback when their contributions are included. QA 6.1.2, QA 7.1.2
 - Wherever possible, proposed changes to the Service's operations are communicated to families some weeks prior to the implementation so that families have an opportunity to comment on and adjust to the change. QA 6.1.1, QA 6.1.2, QA 7.1.2
 - Information from parents about their child remains confidential. (Refer to the Service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*). QA 7.1.2
 - Parents are welcome at the Service at any time. In addition, the Service actively seeks their involvement in its daily activities
 - To share aspects of their culture and talents
 - To help prepare morning and afternoon tea for special occasions
 - To prepare and assist in craft activities. QA 6.1.2
 - Educators meet regularly to assess the Service's progress towards meeting the requirements of the National Quality Standard, and to work on the necessary documentation. Parents are invited to many of these meetings, and minutes of these meetings are made available to parents who were absent. QA 7.2.3

Additional safe practices for infants

- To ensure each child's needs and requirements are fully communicated to educators each day because infants undergo rapid growth and development (e.g. teething), and their responses to certain foods and medications are as yet unknown.
 - To accurately communicate information about their infant's last bottle, sleep time, medication etc.
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Responsibilities of parents

- To inform the Service of their preferred way to receive information from the Service, and to provide any information about their child and family that supports educators meeting the child's educational and care needs.
- To raise their concerns in a timely manner and to work with the Service to overcome them.
- To contribute information and ideas to the Service's Quality Improvement Plan whenever possible.
- To complete surveys and questionnaires wherever possible.

Links to other policies

- Educational Program Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Grievance and Complaints Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy
- Professionalism and Ethics Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Revised National Quality Standard 2018

Regs	157	Access for parents
QA	1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program
	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
	6.1	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
	6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
	6.1.2	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
	6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing
	6.2.2	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.
	6.2.3	The service builds relationships and engages with its community
	7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
	7.2.1	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place

Sources

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Revised Guide to the National Quality Standard 2018
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Further reading and useful websites

- Andrews, J. (2011). *Bridging the gap: Working with grandparents*. http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/p22_WorkingwithGrandparents_Jun11.pdf accessed 5 February 2016
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority – <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/> accessed 5 February 2016
- National Childcare Accreditation Council. (2010). *Factsheet for families: Sharing information about your child*. <http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/FFSharingInformationDec2010.pdf> accessed 5 February 2016

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

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Next Review Date:

Date(s) reviewed: