

Family Participation and Communication

Introduction

"Families are the primary influence in their children's lives and also have strong beliefs and values regarding the education and care of their children, and the experiences in which their children should be able to participate. Effective relationships between educators and families are fundamental to the quality of education and care that children receive."

Adapted from the Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA (2020)

Family participation at Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten is an important part of making the service a true part of the community and creating an environment that is welcoming and inclusive and supports a sense of belonging for children, families and educators.

Goals

- Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten welcomes and facilitates family participation and open communication in the service by encouraging families to engage with their children's education and care. Families are invited to ATTEND Parent Committee meetings, assist with projects and attend social gatherings. Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten has an open-door policy for families.
- Families are invited to take on an active role on the Management Committee as an executive committee member or a general committee member at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten values the input of families, educators and the wider community to help create service that meets the needs of the children who attend the service.
- Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten encourages open communication through the enrolment and orientation process, policy review, feedback forms, the parent committee, the daily program, documentation, formal and informal meetings, emails and conversations.

Strategies

The Approved Provider and/or the Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure that parents may enter the education and care services at any time unless such entry would pose a risk to the safety of children/educators or breach court orders regarding access to children.
- Ensure that educators provide information to families regarding the content and operation of the educational program, in relation to their child and that a copy of the educational program is available for inspection at the education and care service.
- Ensure that families have access to documents regarding the assessment of the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program and assessments of the child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program.
- Ensure that parents are notified immediately but no later than 24 hours of any incident, injury, trauma or illness that occurs for their child while at the education and care service.
- Ensure that administrative spaces are adequate for the purpose of consulting with parents and for conducting private conversations.

- Ensure that parents are notified of changes to policies or fees and given adequate notice as per the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Ensure that a copy of the Education and Care Services National Regulations is available for parents to access.
- Ensure that the enrolment and orientation process provides families with information about the philosophy, policies and practices of the education and care services prior to children's first attendance at the service.
- Establish a Parent Committee to encourage family involvement in the education and care service. The Parent Committee will elect representatives to oversee and chair meetings. Each Parent Committee meeting will have an agenda and executive and general committee members will be invited to participate in the general meeting. The fundraising committee will participate in the fundraising meeting with executive and general committee members. Parent Committee attendees will have input into the continuing improvements within the Centre. A Parent Committee representative will assist with staff recruitment, family activities, encourage community partnerships and service events. The director/Nominated Supervisor will attend each meeting.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Encourage families to provide feedback regarding the enrolment and orientation process and when reviewing policies and procedures to improve processes and practice.
- Ensure that parents may enter the education and care services at any time unless such entry would pose a risk to the safety of children/educators or breach court orders regarding access to children.
- Inform families about the processes for providing feedback and making complaints.
- Develop an enrolment and orientation procedures that ensures families are provided with information about the philosophy, policies and practices of the education and care services prior to children's first attendance at the service.

Educators will:

- Inform families about the processes for providing feedback and making complaints.
- Be available for families at pick up and drop off times to pass on important messages and information about their child's participation in the education and care program.
- Encourage families to be involved in the education and care service and the program through feedback, visiting the service, bringing in items from the home environment and giving feedback on children's emerging interests and needs.
- Promote continuous open and honest two-way communication with families to assist them to feel connected with their children's experiences in the education and care setting and to develop families' trust and confidence in the education and care service.
- Value parents as the first and most important educator in their child's life, seeking to share the parent's understandings, knowledge and preferences for their child and seeking to balance individual needs with practice in the education and care service.
- Recognise that because families, and parents in particular, are often busy with many competing priorities, they will need to consider a range of strategies to build and maintain relationships with each family.
- Make documentation available to families and prepare documentation in a way that is readily understandable to the parents of the child and to other educators.

- Ensure that parents are notified immediately but no later than 24 hours of any incident, injury, trauma or illness that occurs for their child while at the education and care service.

Families will:

- Provide accurate information on enrolment and medical information forms during the enrolment process and notify educators when any information changes.
- Be invited to contribute to the quality improvement process within the education and care service.
- Be encouraged to attend children's excursions to help meet required ratios and to support their children's knowledge of and engagement in their community.
- Be invited to assist with working bees in the education and care service. These will be arranged from time to time to help maintain equipment and the education and care environment and will be a family event where children can also participate.
- Be invited to family events to be held periodically to help families network and develop friendships in the local community. Educators will be encouraged to attend these events.

Evaluation

Families feel valued and welcomed as the first and most important educator in their child's life. Continuous improvement in the education and care setting is occurring because collaboration, clear communication, reflection, constructive feedback and positive relationships are fostered between all participants.

Statutory Legislation and Considerations

- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being and Becoming, 2009

Sources

- Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA
- Raising Children Network
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/for-professionals/working-with-parents/coounicating-with-parents/involving-parents-in-school>
- Community Early Learning Australia (CELA)

Links To:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations: 75, 76,80, 86, 111, 157, 168, 172, 185
- National Quality Standards/ Elements: 1.1, 1.3.3, 2.1.2, 2.2.2, 3.1, 6.1, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 7.1

Links to other Policies

- Interactions with Children
- Excursions
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Feedback
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Incidents, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Record Keeping