

# Family Participation and Communication Policy and Procedure

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**Introduction** Family participation in the children's service is an important part of making the service a true part of the community. Strong family participation and communication assists to create an environment that is welcoming, inclusive and supports a sense of belonging for children, families and staff.

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**Policy** The children's service welcomes and facilitates family participation and open communication by encouraging families to engage with their children's service. Families are invited to attend parent meetings, assist with projects and attend social gatherings. The children's service has an open door policy for all families.

The children's service values the input of families, staff and the wider community to help create a service that meets the needs of children who attend the service.

The children's service encourages open communication through a range of forums e.g. the enrolment and orientation process, policy review, evaluation surveys, the daily program, documentation, formal and informal meetings, emails and conversations.

"Partnerships with families contribute to building a strong, inclusive community within the service. Continuous, honest and open two-way communication with educators assists families to feel connected with their children's experience in education and care and helps them develop trust and confidence in the service. Shared decision making with families supports consistency between children's experiences at home and at the service, helping children to feel safe, secure and supported." Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011), p.148

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**Definitions** N/A

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**Eligibility** This policy applies to all Learning Links children's services programs under the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

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**Responsible**

Responsibilities for the policy are:

Person	Responsible for
Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that parents may enter the children’s service at any time unless such entry would pose a risk to the safety of children/staff or breach court orders regarding access to children.</li> <li>• Ensure that staff 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 children’s service.</li> <li>• Inform families about the processes for providing feedback and making complaints.</li> <li>• Ensure that families have access to documents regarding the assessment of the child’s developmental needs, interests, experiences, participation in the educational program and assessments of the child’s progress against the outcomes of the educational program.</li> <li>• Ensure that a weekly menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided each day is displayed in a place accessible to parents (for children’s services that provide and serve food).</li> <li>• Ensure that parents are notified of any incident, injury, trauma or illness that occurs for their child while at the children’s service.</li> <li>• Ensure that administrative spaces are adequate for the purpose of consulting with parents and for conducting private conversations.</li> <li>• Ensure that parents are notified of changes to policies or fees and given adequate notice as per the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations</i>.</li> <li>• Ensure that a copy of the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011</i> is available for parents to access.</li> <li>• Ensure that the enrolment and orientation process provides families with information about the philosophy, policies and practices of the children’s service prior to children’s first attendance at the service.</li> <li>• Develop systems for families to provide feedback regarding the enrolment and orientation process and when reviewing policies and procedures to improve processes and practice.</li> <li>• Provide a variety of ways to encourage family involvement in the children’s service.</li> </ul>
Children’s services staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform families about the processes for providing feedback and making complaints.</li> <li>• 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 children’s service.</li> <li>• Encourage families to be involved in the children’s 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.</li> <li>• Promote continuous open and honest two-way communication with families to assist them to feel connected with their children’s experiences in the children’s service and to develop families’ trust and confidence in the children’s service.</li> <li>• 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 children’s service.</li> <li>• Recognize 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.</li> <li>• Make documentation available to families and prepare documentation in a way that is readily understandable to the parents of the child and to other staff.</li> </ul>

Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide accurate information on enrolment and medical information forms during the enrolment process and notify educators when any information changes.</li> <li>• Be invited to contribute to the quality improvement process within the children's service.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Be invited to assist with working bees in the children's service. These will be arranged from time to time to help maintain equipment and the children's service environment.</li> <li>• Be invited to family events to be held periodically to help families network and develop friendships in the local community. Staff will be encouraged to attend these events.</li> </ul>
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### Related documents

#### 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 (2011)
- Raising Children Network – Involving parents in school and childcare - [http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/involving\\_parents\\_in\\_school\\_and\\_childcare.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/involving_parents_in_school_and_childcare.html)
- Community Childcare Cooperative NSW <http://cccnsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/family-participation-and-communication.pdf>

#### Links to other policies/documents

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

#### Links to Education and Care Services National Regulations: 75, 76,80, 86, 111, 157, 172, 185

**Links to National Quality Standards/Elements:** 1.1, 1.1.4, 2.1.4, 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 3.1, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1.1, 7.2, 7.3.5

#### Key resources:

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA):  
[www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)  
 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

### Document control

This table outlines the control details for this document.

Element	Details
Document Name	PS – Family Participation and Communication Policy and Procedure
Document Owner	Sarah Herbert
Version Number	1.0
Effective Date	18.08.2016
Review Date	18.08.2018
Authorisation	Diane Peacock-Smith