

# Interactions with Families

## Background

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As outlined in the National Quality Standard and the Early Years Learning Framework, 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

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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

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- 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 6.1.1, 6.2.1
- 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 2.1.1, 6.1.1
- The Service uses many avenues to exchange information with families. These include:
  - Face to face
  - Newsletters
  - Storypark
  - 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 6.2.2, 6.3.1, 6.3.4
- The Service accesses translation services for non-English speaking families. (ISA) 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:
  - Child Profile Sheet
  - Family Photo Observation
  - Provision for parent's comments on the Daily Program, Individual Child's Records, Learning Stories and individual Portfolio's

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- 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 7.3.4
- 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 2.1.2
- 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 6.1.3, 7.3.5
- Information from parents about their child remains confidential. (Refer to the Service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*). QA 7.3.1
- Parents are welcome at the Service at any time. In addition, the Service actively seeks their involvement in its daily activities. QA 6.1.2

## Responsibilities of parents

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- To provide any information about their child and family that supports educators meeting the child's educational and care needs.
- To raise any 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

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- 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, National Quality Standard 2011

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Regs	157	Access for parents
QA	1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program
	1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families
	2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported
	2.1.2	Each child's comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
	6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families

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6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.3	Current information about the service is available to families
6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing
6.2.2	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing
6.3.1	Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained
6.3.4	The service builds relationships and engages in their local community
7.2.3	An effective self-assessment and quality improvement process is in place
7.3.1	Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements
7.3.4	Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner
7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly

## Sources

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- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011.

## Further reading and useful websites

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- Andrews, J. (2011). *Bridging the gap: Working with grandparents*. [http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/p22\\_WorkingwithGrandparents\\_Jun11.pdf](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

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Bella Grace Early Learning Centres encourage 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.

**Date reviewed: February 2017**

**Next review Date: February 2018**