

Intereach Children's Services

Collaborative Partnerships Procedure



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| Applies to | Intereach Family Day Care (FDC) and Intereach Out Of School Hours (OOSH) | | | | |
| Policy | NQS Six: Children's Services Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities Policy | | | | |
| Version | 2.0 | Date approved | 09/06/2023 | Next review date | 09/06/2026 |

1. Objective

Intereach recognises that families are the primary influence on children's development and the most important people in children's lives. Children learn about their world and their place in it through everyday experiences, conversations and routines with their families. Research has shown us that when families are involved in their child's early education and care, their child achieves more regardless of their socioeconomic level, ethnic or racial background, or the parents' educational level (McDermott, 2010).

Intereach Children's Services aims to provide a caring and supportive environment where families and the wider community feel welcomed and valued. Partnerships with families and communities is actively sought and open communication continually maintained.

2. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor to:

- establish a culture of collaboration, inclusion and positive communication between staff, educators and families;
- highlight the importance of positive partnerships with families to ensure high quality care and education is delivered to children;
- develop systems for families to provide feedback regarding the enrolment and orientation process and when reviewing policies and procedures to improve processes and practices;
- ensure parents/visitors may enter the service 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; and,
- promote an environment of open communication between educators, staff and families to support the child's wellbeing;

It is the responsibility of Educators and staff to:

- ensure the families are welcome visitors at the services and educator's homes at all times that their child is in care;
- inform and update parents of all relevant issues in the service through direct contact, notice boards, emails, or newsletters;
- explain experiences or answer any questions about the service to parents on request;
- accept and value individual, cultural & religious differences in child rearing practices of families; and,
- promote continuous open and honest two-way communication with families to assist them to feel connected with their child's experiences at the Service.

It is the responsibility of families to:

- participate in continuous open and honest two-way communication with the service to assist them to feel connected with their child's experiences at the service;

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- provide accurate information on enrolment, including medical information during the enrolment process and notify staff or educators when any information changes;
- work in consultation with the service regarding any current Court Orders and/or parenting plans to ensure the safe, consistent care of the child; and,
- contribute to the quality improvement process within the Education and Care Service.

3. Procedure

3.1. Participation

Families' involvement is actively sought in the service by:

- asking for their assistance and participation in particular events such as assisting in the program or excursions, working bees and other special events such as Family Play-sessions, Family Days, Children's Week, Children's Christmas Parties or community cultural events;
- encouraging feedback and input from families in relation to the program, policies or other issues relating to the operation of services;
- encouraging families to offer skills and knowledge in a variety of ways and to contribute to the diversity of experiences for the children attending the service such as sharing a cultural activity with the children e.g. craft, cooking, musical experience;
- informing families of the participation policy through the parent information booklet/s and through other communications throughout the year; and,
- informing families of the management structure of the service and how they can be involved e.g. by attending parent meetings or advisory meetings, focus groups (e.g. NQF, policy review);

3.2. Support and Feedback

- A range of strategies are considered to build and maintain relationships with each family. Recognising the fact that families and parents might be busy.
- Feedback from Families are actively sought about their child's experiences and learning.
- Families will be Consulted in relation to the cultural appropriateness of the learning environment.
- Family diversity is honoured by building trusting relationships that respect cultural, spiritual and lifestyle choices.
- We support families who may feel isolated by carefully considering and understanding that past experiences which might affect a family's ability to contribute to relationships.
- We support parents in their role as primary caregivers. When required, provide families with relevant information regarding support agencies, training, specialists, counselling and/or funding to enable access and participation.

3.3. Communication

- Families will be greeted at drop-off and collection in a positive and supportive manner, making them feel welcome and valued.
- Matters that require a detailed exchange of information or discussion can be arranged by the educators/staff or families. These discussions will be held at a mutually suitable time.
- Principles of positive communication include:

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- effective communication builds understanding and trust;
- listening is the foundation of effective communication; and,
- in every interaction between educator and families, one of the goals is to strengthen the partnership.

3.4. Families

Intereach encourages Family members of children enrolled with Intereach Children's Services to:

- communicate positively with children, educators and staff (i.e. always speak in respectful tones and use positive language);
- respect the rights and dignity of all children in the service and not engage with a child at the service which may intimidate that child or cause physical or emotional harm;
- respect the rights and privacy of other families in the service. This includes understanding that parenting styles will vary and not photograph children other than their own in the service, unless written consent has been given by the child's parent/guardian;
- respect educator's property, privacy and confidentiality;
- be unaffected by drugs or alcohol when attending the service;
- be a positive role model to children at all times when at the service;
- be tolerant of cultural differences, differing needs, abilities and personalities of stakeholders of the service;
- respect the routines and guidelines for the children attending the service;
- bring any concerns they have about another child (that is not their own) or parent at the service to the attention of the Responsible Person;
- follow the Complaint Policy when expressing concerns or complaints to educators;
- work collaboratively with educators to resolve any issues their family may have;
- refrain from public criticism of educators or other families at the service. The Complaints Policy will be followed if the initial issue cannot be resolved; and,
- report any hazard observed in the service that may cause injury to a child or educator.

Note: While educators and staff strive to maintain positive relationships with all families, in the event that issues occur that cannot be resolved to mutual satisfaction, the service retains the right to end the enrolment.

3.5. Community

In relation to the community, staff and educators will:

- gain local knowledge (including traditional knowledge) and work collaboratively with the local community;
- take an interest in what is happening and is important to people in your community and embrace cultural celebrations to learn about each other;
- advocate and raise awareness of issues impacting children, families and the education and care sector;
- collaborate and build partnerships with local agencies, professionals, and schools to support positive experiences, transitions and outcomes for children and families; and,
- when available and appropriate, participate in community stakeholder meetings and respect the diverse perspectives and knowledge of other professionals.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and review

This procedure will be reviewed every three years and incorporate feedback and suggestions from children, families, educators, coordinators, volunteers, and students.

5. National Quality Framework

| Element | Concept | Description |
|----------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6.1 | Supportive relationships with families | Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role. |
| 6.1.1 | Engagement with the service | Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions. |
| 6.1.2 | Parent views are respected | 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 | Families are supported | Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing. |
| 6.2 | Collaborative partnerships | Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing. |
| 6.2.1 | Transitions | Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities. |
| 6.2.2 | Access and participation | Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program. |
| 6.2.3 | Community engagement | The service builds relationships and engages with its community. |
| 7.1 | Governance | Governance supports the operation of a quality service. |
| 7.1.2 | Management systems | Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service |
| 7.1.3 | Roles and responsibilities | Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision making and operation of the service. |

| 6. Context | |
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| 6.1. Standards or other external requirements | <p>Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority <i>National Quality Standards</i>.</p> <p>Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018 – updated March 2023.</p> <p>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. <i>Childcare Provider Handbook 2018 – modified March 2023</i></p> <p>Early Childhood Australia (2016). Code of Ethics</p> |
| 6.2. Legislation or other requirements | <p>Education and Care Services National Regulations consolidated 2017</p> <p>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</p> <p>Guide to National Quality Framework</p> <p>Add child safe</p> |
| 6.3. Internal Documentation | <p>Children's Services Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities Policy</p> <p>Complaint Policy</p> <p>Privacy Policy</p> <p>Enrolment and Orientation Procedure</p> <p>FDC Enrolment Form</p> <p>OOSH Enrolment Update Form</p> |

| 7. Document control | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Version | Date approved | Approved by | Next review date |
| 1.0 | 16/06/2020 | R. Phillips - Acting Senior Manager – Children and Family Services | 16/06/2023 |
| 2.0 | 09/06/2023 | M. Piffero – General Manager, Operations | 09/06/2023 |