



Talking with Families

Forming meaningful collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

“As we know, children learn from watching and listening to the significant adults around them. Children thrive when families and educators work together in partnership to support young children’s learning.”

(Early Years Learning Framework, p9)

Quality Area 6, Collaborative partnerships with families and communities sets the benchmark for best practice by which Early Education and Care Services include families and communities in their practice to achieve quality outcomes for children.

This is an area in which Education and Care services often struggle to implement effective strategies. Because we know this is such an important area we are often encouraged to ask:

- What do collaborative partnerships with families and communities mean?
- What does family involvement look like?
- How do we get families to be active participants in our programs?
- How do we connect with families in a genuine and meaningful way?

- How can we move beyond the hellos and farewells and build deeper connections?

Families want to know that they are welcome and that educators care about them as well as their child. It is the simple everyday things that will add to a family’s sense of belonging. Families must first feel welcome and comfortable to spend time in our services before they can contribute to our program.

From the minute they walk in the door they want to be greeted with a friendly and understanding smile by someone who knows their name.

“Children do not exist in isolation. Each child is, first and foremost, a member of a family. Parents and other family members are a child’s first and most important teachers.”

(Bringing the Early Years Learning Framework to Life in your Community, p5)

If families are happy and feel welcome then their children will too.

We often ask a great deal of our families and expect them to fill out forms, give written feedback, read charts and signs, answer questions, permissions and advices. Perhaps we see written feedback as the most effective indicator of involvement from parents, maybe because it is tangible and can be used as evidence.

Just like children, each family is unique. If we want to work together we need to get to know them and understand that they can be involved in many different ways.

Professional learning with Gowrie SA

These sessions exploring relationships and attachment theory are scheduled in our professional learning guide and can also be delivered at your service. Call **(08) 8234 5219** to find out more.

Sharing Each Child's Program and Progress

Participants will explore and unpack what they are already doing in their service around the sharing of children's program and progress as well as network with participants from other services to share and learn how others might be doing the same. Participants will deepen their understanding of what the requirements in the NQS are and break down what the wording means.

Meaningful Relationships: Valuing our Families

Working towards a respectful partnership with families is a determining factor in the provision of a quality education and care service for children (QA 6). This session will examine practical ways educators can support and facilitate collaborative partnerships. Mechanisms to develop partnerships based on active communication and consultation between families and educators will also be explored.

Developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

This session will provide an overview of our ongoing journey towards reconciliation and links to resources and organisations such as Reconciliation Australia that can support you to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan for your service.

References:

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2018), Guide to the National Quality Standard, Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, Sydney

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2009), Belonging, Being & Becoming, the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia



Further Resources

Parent Partnerships: Parents and Caregivers Together (DVD)

This video and self-paced learning package discusses the importance of quality educator and parent relationships in achieving optimal outcomes for children in child care settings.

Concepts of Primary Caregiving and Structures that Support Implementation in Early Childhood Settings (e-Booklet)

Primary Care Giving (PCG) is a model of care provided in early childhood settings that facilitates children's development of secure attachments to early childhood educators. This resource discusses the ways in which PCG can provide benefits to children, families and educators as well as addressing some of the challenges of PCG.

The Father/Child Journey (DVD)

The aim of this DVD is to help fathers to appreciate the important role they play in the emotional development of their children. The images show examples of interactions between fathers and children. Cost: \$55



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