

***Rationale/Aim:***

Partnerships with families contribute to building a strong inclusive preschool community. They make the preschool a welcoming part of the community which supports a sense of belonging for children, families and educators. Continuous, honest, two-way communication between staff and families assists families to feel connected with their children's preschool experience. It also encourages their trust and confidence in the preschool service. Collaborative relationships encourage consistency between children's experiences at home and at preschool. This helps children to feel safe, secure and supported.

Relevant Legislation/Related Documents/References:

- Education & Care Services National Regulations 2014, Regulation 75, 76,80, 86, 111, 157, 172, 185
- National Quality Standard, Element 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
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being and Becoming
- Raising Children Network – Involving parents in school and childcare - http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/involving_parents_in_school_and_childcare.html
- Community Child Care Co-Operative www.cccnsw.org.au
- Childcare Centre Desktop www.childcarecentredesktop.com

Procedures/Strategies:

- The preschool has an open door policy for families. Parents may enter the preschool at any time unless such entry would pose a risk to the safety of children/workers or breach court orders regarding access to children.
- Families will be invited to join the Preschool Association and be elected to the Governing Board that oversees the operation of the preschool.
- Families will be invited to contribute to the *Quality Improvement Plan*.
- The preschool values the input of families, workers and the wider community to help create a service that meets the needs of the children who attend. They will encourage community partnerships and service events.
- The preschool will encourage open communication through feedback forms, surveys and the complaints process. Parents will be provided with information on how to do this.
- Families will be asked to assist with basic maintenance of the preschool eg working bees, odd jobs, washing and fundraising.
- Child Care Workers will provide information to families regarding the content and operation of the educational program, ensuring a copy of the programme is displayed and available for parents to comment upon. Workers will encourage families to be involved in the program through feedback, visiting the service, bringing items from home and discussing children's emerging interests and needs
- Families will have access to documents regarding their child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational programme. This will include assessments of the child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program. It will be readily understandable to the parents of the child and to other workers.
- Information which accurately describes any food and beverages provided by the preschool will be displayed in a place accessible to parents.
- Parents will be notified of any incident, injury, trauma or illness that occurs for their child while at the

education and care service.

- Adequate space will be available for the purpose of consulting with parents and for conducting private conversations.
- The enrolment and orientation process provides families with information about the philosophy, policies and practices of the preschool services prior to their child's first attendance. Families are given a form to provide feedback on the enrolment and orientation process.
- Parents are asked for feedback when reviewing policies and procedures.
- Parents are notified of changes to policies or fees and given adequate notice as per the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- A copy of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 is available for parents to access.
- Child Care Workers will be available for families at pick up and drop off times to share information about the child. If a lengthy time is required, the CCW will be available for a meeting with the family at a more suitable time.
- Child Care Workers will 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 preschool practice.
- Staff will aim to develop families' trust and confidence in the preschool.
- Parents often have a skill or talent they can share such as music, cooking, craft, a language other than English, reading to children etc. Staff will encourage parents to share these at the preschool.
- Families will be encouraged to attend excursions to help meet ratios and to support their children's knowledge of and engagement in their community.
- The preschool appreciates that each family has preferences for convenient communication, therefore as many mediums as possible are offered eg formal meetings, informal conversations, written notes, preschool signage and electronic media.
- Information to go home is handed to the parent as they sign their child in or out. If the child travels on the preschool bus, the carer on the bus will hand notes to parents. If the child travels on a school bus, their notes will be sent home in their bag.
- The notice board will display copies of all notes sent home, except for confidential items such as accounts.
- Families will be invited to social events to encourage networking and develop friendships within the preschool community, eg special celebrations such as NADOC week activities. Preschool staff will be encouraged to attend these events.
- Information will be available to families about community services and resources to support families and parenting.
- All workers recognise that because families/parents are often busy with many competing priorities, they need to consider a range of strategies to build and maintain relationships with each family.
- Children cannot be expected to convey messages.
- All information shared will be treated as strictly confidential.
- Families who require interpretive services will be supported

Families will be expected to:

- Provide accurate information on enrolment and notify child care workers when any information changes.

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

Endorsement:

Policy signed:

Date:

Name:

Position:

Review: May 2017