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# FAMILY PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

## QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

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**National Quality Standard (NQS)**

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships		
6.1	<b>Supportive relationships with families</b>	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
6.1.1	<b>Engagement with the service</b>	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in their service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.2	<b>Parent views are respected</b>	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	<b>Families are supported</b>	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.2	<b>Collaborative partnerships</b>	Collaborative partnerships enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
6.2.1	<b>Transitions</b>	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.
6.2.2	<b>Access and participation</b>	Effective partnerships support children’s access, inclusion and participation in the program
6.2.3	<b>Community and engagement</b>	The service builds relationships and engages with its community

*“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 support 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.

## Introduction

Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC) believes that family participation is an important part of making WECC a true part of the community and creating an environment that is welcoming and inclusive and supports a sense of belonging for children, families and educators.

We encourage family participation and open communication within WECC. Families are invited to attend excursions and assist with projects, consistent with our open-door policy. We aim to ensure open communication is consistent through the enrolment and orientation process, policy review, Management Committee, daily program, documentation, formal and informal meetings, emails and conversations.

We understand the primary influence that families have in their children's lives, and that effective relationships between educators and families are fundamental to achieve quality outcomes for children. Community partnerships that focus on active communication, consultation and collaboration also contribute to children's learning and wellbeing.

## Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

## Goals – What are we aiming to do?

- WECC welcomes and facilitates family participation and open communication in the Centre by encouraging families to engage with their children's education and care. Families are invited to attend Management Committee meetings, assist with projects and attend social gatherings.
- WECC has an open-door policy for families
- WECC values the input of families, educators and the wider community to help create a service that meets the needs of the children who attend the service
- WECC encourages open communication through the enrolment and orientation process, policy review, feedback forms, the Management Committee, the daily program, documentation, formal and informal meetings, emails and conversations

## Strategies – How will it be done?

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

### *Access to WECC*

- ensure that parents may enter WECC at any time unless such entry would pose a risk to the safety of children/educators or breach court orders regarding access to children
- ensure that administrative spaces are adequate for the purpose of consulting with parents and for conducting private conversations

### *Access to information*

- ensure that the enrolment and orientation process provides families with information about the philosophy, policies and practices of WECC prior to children's first attendance at WECC

- ensure that educators 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 WECC
- ensure that families have access to documents regarding the assessment of the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program and assessments of the child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program
- ensure that a weekly menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided each day is displayed in a place accessible to parents
- ensure that parents are notified of any incident, injury, trauma or illness that occurs for their child while at WECC
- ensure that parents are notified of changes to policies or fees and given adequate notice as per the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- ensure that a current copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* is available for parents to access
- establish a Management Committee (MC) to encourage family involvement in WECC. The MC will elect representatives to oversee and chair meetings. Each MC meeting will have an agenda and all families will be invited to attend and participate in the meeting. MC attendees will have input into the ongoing improvements within WECC. A MC representative will assist with educator recruitment, family activities, encourage community partnerships and service events. An educator representative will attend each meeting

#### Feedback

- develop systems for families to provide feedback regarding the enrolment and orientation process and when reviewing policies and procedures to improve processes and practice at WECC
- inform families about the processes for providing feedback and making complaints

#### Educators will:

- inform families about the processes for providing feedback and making complaints
- 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 education and care program
- encourage families to be involved in WECC and the education and care program it offers through various means, including: two-way feedback; visiting WECC; bringing in items from the home environment; and giving feedback on children's emerging interests and needs
- promote continuous open and honest two-way communication with families to assist them to feel connected with their children's experiences in the education and care setting and to develop families' trust and confidence in WECC
- value parents as the first and most important educators in their child's life, seeking to share the parents' understandings, knowledge and preferences for their child and seeking to balance individual needs with practices in WECC
- recognise that because families, and parents in particular, are often busy with many competing priorities, educators will need to consider a range of strategies to build and maintain relationships with each family
- make documentation available to families and prepare documentation in a way that is readily understandable to the parents of the child and to other educators

#### Families will:

- provide accurate information on enrolment and medical information forms during the enrolment process and notify educators when any information changes
- be invited to participate in the Management Committee or to attend and participate in the meetings
- be invited to contribute to the quality improvement process within WECC
- 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
- be invited to assist with working bees in WECC. These will be arranged from time to time to help maintain equipment and the education and care environment and will be a family event where children can also participate
- be invited to family events to be held periodically to help families network and develop friendships in the local community. Educators will be encouraged to attend these events

## Evaluation

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

## Related policies /documents

- *Complaints and feedback*
- *Enrolment and orientation*
- *Excursions*
- *Incident, injury, trauma and illness*
- *Interactions with children*
- *Record management*
- *Code of conduct*

## Statutory legislation and considerations

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

## Sources and references

- Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being and Becoming, 2009
- Guide to the National Quality Standard
- 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)
- ECA Code of Ethics

## Authorisation

*John Rothwell*  
President  
2017-18 WECC Management Committee