

Community Involvement Policy

Policy Number: 3

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Rationale and Policy Considerations

The education and care service has an important role to play in encouraging children and their families to feel part of their community and in supporting them to make a contribution to it. Valuable resources can be accessed from within the community to support children's learning and wellbeing. 'The service has an active presence in the local community, seeks to strengthen community links and uses community resources to meet the needs of local families and their children.' (Standard 6.3 - The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children's learning and wellbeing).

Legislation and Government Requirements

- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012.
- Federal and State Equal Opportunity Legislation
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Needs

Children's

To feel connected with their local community; to have access to resources from within the community that supports their learning and wellbeing.

Families'

To be consulted about their own social and cultural backgrounds and feel confident that their culture will be reflected in the service; to have opportunities to establish links with and make a contribution to their community; to have access to people and resources from within the community that supports their child's learning and wellbeing.

Educators

Open communication with parents; information about the people and resources available within the community; involvement in projects and events that support children's learning and establish connections with the community.

Management

Good communication between families and management; family support for the service; relevant up to date information on community values and needs; the service is known and given a positive image within the community; complaints about the service are heard and acted upon.

Scope

This policy is written for children, families, staff and visitors of Merino Court Childcare Centre

Policy Statement

The Education and Care Service will provide regular information about, and on-going opportunities for parents and the community to participate and have input into the services provided at the service. The service will liaise with resource and service providers within the community to determine which networks exist that may connect children and families with the community. Participation in appropriate community projects and events is viewed as a positive contribution to the education and care program. The approved provider/nominated supervisor/educators will actively promote the positive aspects of the service to families and the local community. Any family or community concerns will be dealt with promptly to minimise negative publicity about the service. Providing opportunities for students, volunteers and people seeking work experience in education and care services is seen as a community service, and means of promoting quality education and care within the community.

Policy Principles

Information about the service

- The service newsletter will be made available to groups and individuals identified by the approved provider/nominated supervisor/educators as having an interest in the operations of the service.
- Regular advertising campaigns will take place within the local community to ensure information about the service is widely distributed.
- The service brochure will provide general information about the service to prospective customers.
- The community newspaper will be sent a short editorial about the service and invited to attend to take photos whenever a special event is held at the service.
- A community open day will be held at the service once a year to promote the service and involve the community in special projects initiated by the service.

Connecting with the community

- The service holds current information on relevant community resources and makes these available to families.
- The service will invite community members to visit the education and care service to share their social and cultural heritage with the children, families and educators/staff of the service.
- Educators will reflect those cultural values and diversity of the broader community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, when planning the children's learning and leisure environment.
- Connections with the local community are built through a number of strategies including:
 - Partnerships with families
 - Involvement in community meetings, committees and networks
 - Liaison with other children's services, local businesses, school, health services and organisations working with families and children in the local area
 - Participation in community events
 - Local community members are invited to participate in social events held at the service

Students, volunteers and other visitors

- Ensuring children's safety and wellbeing will always be the prime factor in any decision to invite visitors to the service.
- Visitors may be invited into the service as part of the children's learning and leisure program i.e. members of the Fire Brigade, Police Department, medical or nursing profession may be invited to share aspects of their work that are of interest to children, community people with a skill, art or experience from which the children will gain experience or enjoyment.
- The service will offer student placements to:
 - high school students who wish to gain work experience as part of their school program provided that the school has initiated the placement and the students are studying early childhood or family studies.
 - students attending early childhood or education and care training at college or university.
- All placements will be negotiated through the nominated supervisor/approved provider who will ensure that there are no more than one student placement in each age group/room at any one time. Students will be provided with clear guidelines in relation to their responsibilities and code of conduct whilst at the service and will be closely supervised by educators at all times.
- Volunteers will be accepted for work experience when there are no students on placement at the service and there is evidence of a genuine interest in the work involved. Potential volunteers will be interviewed by the nominated supervisor/approved provider to determine their suitability. All volunteers will be given clear guidelines in relation to their responsibilities and code of conduct whilst at the service.
- All volunteers and students must provide an appropriate current criminal record check or working with children check/card in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Volunteers and students are supplementary to educator/staff requirements and will not be used to replace absent educators/staff unless they are on the service's payroll.

- All other visitors to the service must make an appointment with the nominated supervisor/nominated supervisor or educator. (See also policy on Establishing a Protective Environment)
- Professional access to the service will be at the discretion of the nominated supervisor/approved provider and (if involving the children) with the parent's written consent. The only exception to this would be in the case of children at risk.
- The types of professionals or officials that may require access include:
 - Authorised child protection officers
 - Police Officers (with warrant).
 - Health & Safety Inspectors - have the right of entry under occupational safety and health legislation
 - Authorised officers of the relevant state/territory regulatory authorities have the right of entry under the Education and Care Services National Regulations
 - Australian Government officers - have the right of entry to inspect service records for accountability requirements under the Child Care Act 1972 (Cth).
 - Child Health Nurse.

Related Documents

- **Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010(Vic)** - Part 1 - Preliminary - 3(2)(e); 3(3)(a)(c)(d)&(e); 197
- **Education and Care Services National Regulations:** 76; 157; 171 - 173
- **National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (Oct 2011)** - Element 1.1.1; Element 6.2.2; Element 6.3.1; Element 6.3.4.
- **Early Years Learning Framework for Australia** - Practice: Holistic approaches; Responsiveness to children; Cultural competence; Continuity of learning and transitions - Outcomes: 1, 2, 3
- **Framework for School Age Care in Australia** - Practice: Holistic approaches; Collaboration with children; Cultural competence; Continuity and transitions - Outcomes: 1, 2, 3
- Confidentiality Statement
- Educator/staff Code of Ethics
- Grievance procedures
- Orientation checklists
- Procedure for dealing with privacy complaints

Links to other policies

- Confidentiality and Privacy
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Educational Programs
- Equal Opportunity
- Establishing a Protective Environment
- Excursions and Transport
- Grievances and Complaints Management
- Partnership and Communication with Parents

Sources

www.pscalliance.org.au

Further Sources

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Document History

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