



Collaborative Partnerships with families



Enhance FDC wants to achieve exceptional outcomes for children through family partnerships.

- Families, children, Educators and those running early childhood education services should feel connected. All parties share a vision and mission to provide the children with the best start in life and to build a strong foundation for their future.
- Families trust early childhood Educators to support and nurture their children. Working towards effective, meaningful partnerships ensures a sense of mutual respect as we work toward achieving these shared goals.



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Why is it important to develop family connections and partnerships

Developing partnerships builds trust and establishes comfortable relationships, where families and Educators can share important information.

Encourages families to be involved in events and contribute to the program.
Helps everybody feel understood, respected and valued.

Helps to bridge children's experiences between the program and home, and fosters children's sense of belonging in the Family Day Care setting.



What does the National Quality Standard say?

The aim of Quality Area 6 under the National Quality Standard is to recognise that collaborative relationships with families are fundamental to achieving quality outcomes for children and that community partnerships that are based on active communication, consultation and collaboration are also essential.



What does the EYLF say?

Partnerships are based on the foundations of respecting each other's perspectives, expectations and values, and building on the strength of each other's knowledge and skills. Learning Outcomes are most likely to be achieved when educators work in partnership with children, families, other professionals and communities, including schools.



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How to manage communication between families and Educators if there is a concern.

- ❖ In every interaction with families, one of your goals as an Educator is to strengthen your partnership with them. Always listen and ensure you raise any concerns asap.
- ❖ Find and share the positives about a child's learning, behaviour and experiences. Share these with families, but also raise concerns.
- ❖ Be open and honest. Give parents accurate information on what you observed, when raising any concerns.
- ❖ Think before you speak, especially when you're talking with parents about difficult or sensitive issues.
- ❖ Ask for parents' input. For example, run through their expectations and 'Let parents make informed decisions.'
- ❖ You can suggest ideas, but it's up to parents to decide what to do next. For example, 'We could try a behaviour plan or implement strategies to support children's learning.'
- ❖ If you're not sure about what to say next or how to say it, you don't have to respond straight away. For example, 'I'd like to think about that more. Can I get back to you tomorrow?' Always make sure you follow up.



The benefits of positive relationships

Benefits for children

- Enhanced feelings of safety and belonging
- Comfortable and positive relationships with their Educators
- Positive relationships with other children
- Engaged in learning experiences
- Calmer transitions

Benefits for Families

- Actively involved in children's education and care
- Understanding of and commitment to children's development
- Continuity of learning in the home
- Increased family wellbeing
- High levels of advocacy within and for the service

Benefits for Educators

- A positive learning environment
- A positive working environment
- Improved outcomes for children
- Having families as service advocates



How do we build partnerships:



A child's home environment has significant impact on their learning and development. To build your relationship with families, it is important to learn about their family background, cultural needs and other matters that influence the home environment. This knowledge will help you think about how you can best engage with that family and how your practices might be adapted. This also gives you an opportunity to find out about different family perspectives and expectations.

As a starting point to build positive relationships, you can gather this relevant knowledge on initial enquiry or through the enrolment and orientation process.



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- ❑ Update families on the topics, activities and experiences that currently interest their children. Find out what interests them at home and use this information to inform your curriculum, environment and intentional teaching strategies.
- ❑ Share examples of children’s work (send portfolios home regularly for families to look at in their own time with their child).
- ❑ Provide families with both verbal and written feedback about their child, in a way that suits their individual needs.
- ❑ Use your notice board to let families know what play experiences interest their children and what opportunities will be offered in the coming days or week. (A program)
- ❑ Photos and annotation may be a useful way of sharing this type of information .
- ❑ Send home photos, portfolios of the children engaged in experiences with captions describing what or how they are learning, link to the EYLF. (Observations).
- ❑ Invite families to share information about their cultural values and traditions. This is an opportunity to develop your cultural competency and think of ways to value and reflect diversity in your setting.
- ❑ Provide information sessions for families on issues affecting them or their children. This is especially important for children who are new to your setting. You might focus on how children learn through play or understanding the EYLF Learning Outcomes.
- ❑ Encourage families to look at the EYLF for ideas about what they can do to support their children’s learning and development at home.
- ❑ Provide information about local community resources and facilities, for example public libraries, family and parenting support programs, health services or initiatives and immunisation programs.
- ❑ Invite families to spend time in the setting to see the practices of staff and learn what their children do.
- ❑ Share resources with families to support children’s learning and development at home.
- ❑ Be mindful when having conversations or documenting that you are not diagnosing children with additional needs or labelling. Ensure you are supporting Families to seek professional advice and support.
- ❑ Set up a welcoming environment that conveys the message– **we belong**



Reflective Questions

What opportunities have I included to ensure shared decision making with families occurs regarding the service operations?

How do I show respect for the lifestyle choices and cultural traditions of families attending my service?

What message does the entrance to my service and overall environment give to families?

What opportunities am I providing for families contribute to the curriculum?

What opportunities am I providing for to network, share experiences and expertise?

What methods of communication am I using to support families' individual needs?

How am I providing information on local community resources including parenting support agencies, local support groups?

Where Our Journey Began.....

Our journey began with the team coming together with the realization that we were all using different philosophies and wanting to have a more unified overall philosophy that best represented Enhance as a whole.

Information has been collated and informed from various stakeholders, including Educators, Families, Staff and Children.

A philosophy working group has collaborated and gathered evidence that best represents Enhance, what we believe in, what we stand for and what we do. With this evidence we were able to create the comprehensive, whole service philosophy which we are excited to share with you tonight.



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