CatholicCare
DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

Children's Services

Family Participation and Collaboration

Policy

Version: 3.1
Updated: 10 March 2026
Review due: March 2027
Document ID: 12011-031

Contents

Introduction 3
Scope 3
Policy Statement 3
Procedures 3
- Informal discussions between educators and families 3
- Set mutually agreed meeting times 4
- Settling children into the program 4
- Sharing information and joint decision making 4
- Inviting feedback and input into policies and procedures 4
- Sharing information about the children's educational program 4
- Sharing expertise and culturally relevant experiences 4
- Donating materials 5
- Participating in community get together 5

Related documents 5
Links and references 5
Sign off and review 6
History 6

Introduction

CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay (CatholicCare) supports and encourages family participation and collaboration in its Children's Services. It is through this collaboration and partnership with families that we can make the experience of attending our service more meaningful for children.

This policy and procedure is guided by the National Quality Standard, and the principles of *"Belonging, Being and Becoming" in the Early Years Learning Framework* and *"My Time, Our Place" Framework for School Age Care*.

We aim to develop a relationship with each family, in order to:

- Support the child's developing identity by promoting a mutually respectful relationship with the child's family.
- Develop the child's confidence and enhance the child's contribution and link to the program by valuing the contribution and insight of their families.
- Enhance the child's well-being by sharing decision making with their families.

Scope

This policy applies to all Staff, Educators, Contractors, Students and Volunteers in Children's Services programs.

Policy Statement

CatholicCare is committed to developing respectful and positive relationships with family through:

- Acknowledging, respecting and supporting children's family cultures and values,
- Having open conversations with families in relation to the child and family needs,
- Sharing information with families about the services educational program,
- Inviting and actively listening to input from families, and
- Having procedures in place which promote and facilitate family participation.

Procedures

Educators will invite families to participate and collaborate in the service through a range of opportunities.

These include the following:

Informal discussions between educators and families

Educators will use arrival and departure times as a brief opportunity to talk about matters that are relevant to the child, e.g. activities, feelings, interests, friendships, special events. This is a good time to exchange ideas and perspectives in relation to the child's development and wellbeing. Parents will be encouraged to contribute their ideas and insights about their child.

Set mutually agreed meeting times

In order to not compromise the need to actively supervise children while they are in attendance at the service, a separate appointment time may be arranged for a detailed discussion with the child's family. Educators or families may request to meet at a mutually agreeable time.

Settling children into the program

New families are invited to spend some time with their child as they settle in. This gives parents and children the opportunity to gradually get used to the new environment. Staying with the child also gives parents the opportunity to:

- Observe some of the routines,
- Meet other children and parents,
- Watch interactions between adults and children, and
- Ask questions.

CatholicCare Children's Services has an open door policy, and parents are always welcome to participate, contribute their expertise and collaborate with educators.

Sharing information and joint decision making

Information about the educational program is displayed at each service and is kept where it can be readily accessed by parents. Educators will discuss relevant information with a parent on request, such as information about the education program, their child's participation or educator assessments.

Educators will offer a range of options for parents to select the most suitable way to share information about the child, e.g. telephone calls, face to face meetings, or communication books.

Educators will always encourage families to participate in decision making.

Inviting feedback and input into policies and procedures

Educators will gather feedback and comments from families about the service's policies and procedures continuously. Feedback may include informal comments given during everyday conversations. At times, families will also be asked to formally comment on policies through surveys or at meetings.

Sharing information about the children's educational program

Educators will keep documentation about each Children's Service curriculum. They will regularly use this documentation to discuss the curriculum content with families. These discussions will provide an opportunity for families to share their input through comments, perspectives and ideas.

Sharing expertise and culturally relevant experiences

Educators will encourage parents to share their expertise, including practices and information that are relevant to their culture in order to enhance the educational program and all aspects of the service. E.g. an Aboriginal parent may introduce Aboriginal art or dance to the children, a parent may talk about a significant cultural celebration to the children, a parent with expertise in nutrition may provide feedback about menu planning, or a parent who has an interest in art might do an art activity with the children or give suggestions about different art media to use with children.

Donating materials

Educators will ask families to donate materials that can be recycled. These will be used to provide opportunities for children to see the potential in recycled materials and engage in processes of re-creation and re-invention. These materials may include paper, boxes, bright fabrics and anything else that children can use in flexible and imaginative ways.

Participating in community get together

From time to time there are opportunities for a community get together within the service, i.e. functions, barbecues or meetings. These events are an opportunity for families to meet up with each other and with educators in a relaxed atmosphere.

It is the intention of educators to acknowledge and draw on the insights that parents have about their children. By sharing information, ideas and insights educators and families can gain an increased understanding of children and enhance their learning opportunities.

Related documents

- *Children's Services Statement of Philosophy*
- *Feedback, Complaints and Grievance Policy*
- *Code of Conduct for Families*

Links and references

- *ACECQUA: Quality Area 6: Building Partnerships with Families*
- *Belonging, Being and Becoming in the Early Years Learning Framework*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* *(current version as of 10 May 2024)*
- *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care*

Sign off and review

Version	Authorised by	Approved date	Review cycle	Review due
1.0	CatholicCare CMT	25 November 2013	2 years	November 2015
2.0	CatholicCare Executive	17 October 2016	2 years	October 2018
2.2	General Manager Children's Services	14 March 2022	2 years	March 2024
3.0	Quality Practice Manager Children's Services	18 September 2024	Review date adjusted to align with new review schedule	1 March 2027

History

Version	Description	Author	Amendment date
1.0	Policy	Manager Quality Policy and Legislation	November 2013
2.0	Policy	Manager Children's Services	October 2016
2.1	Policy and Procedure	Manager Children's Services	February 2017
2.2	Policy	Quality and Practice Manager Children's Services	1 February 2022
2.3	Policy	Policy and Document Support Officer	6 December 2023
3.0	Policy	Policy Specialist	18 September 2024
3.1	Name change CS Policy	Policy and Programs Officer	10 March 2026