



6.1 Parent and Community Collaborations Policy

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Aims

In conjunction with the centre's stated philosophy, and past early childhood tradition, the **Cootamundra Preschool** aims regarding parent and community collaborations are:

1. To view parental involvement in all preschool activities including the educational program, as an interactive, integrated process that will:

- Benefit the children in terms of their ability to maximise the effectiveness of the program (as supported by research in the early childhood field as well as at other levels of education)
- Provide continuity as children make the transition from home to preschool and from the preschool to primary school
- Contextualise learning meaningfully for all children through acknowledgement of each child's family and cultural background
- Expect and respect diversity in all its many forms

2. Local community involvement is highly supported and valued by this preschool which is situated in a small, rural community. A centre-to-community web of relationships will be encouraged both indirectly through normal parental involvement in the centre, and by more direct links among the preschool and various community groups, individuals, facilities and events such as the town's annual show, fairs, festivals and other events.

(Note: acknowledgement of parents as partners can be found in all the centre's policies.)

Legislative Requirements

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Children (Education and Care National Law Application) Act 2010
Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Equal Opportunity & Discrimination Act 1986
Racial Discrimination Act 1975
Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Who Is Effected By This Policy?

Children
Staff
Families
Management

Relevant Early Childhood Professional Standards

Early Childhood Code of Ethics:	I-3 to I-5, I-7, II-1 to II-10, IV-1 to IV-6, IV-1
Early Years Learning Framework:	Outcomes: 2.1, Principles:1-4
Education & Care Services Australian National Regulations:	15

Date reviewed by staff: April 2015
Date reviewed by committee: May 2015
Next review date: July 2018

National Quality Framework:

Quality areas: 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 1.3.1,
1.3.3, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.2.3, 7.1.2

Sources/References

Athey, C. (2007). *Extending thought in children: A parent teacher relationship*. (2nd Ed.), London UK: Paul Chapman

Early Childhood Australia: *The parent partnership*: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au> (Retrieved January 2012)

Harris, K. & Graham, S. (2010). (Eds.), *Working with families of young children with special needs*. New York NY: Guilford Press

Keyser, J. (2008). *From parents to partners: Building a family centered early childhood program*. St Paul MI: Redleaf Press

MacNaughton, G. (2004). Children, staff & parents: Building respectful relationships in New Zealand & Australian early childhood contexts – the Australian context. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 29 (1) pp1-7

Procedures

1. The Educators will establish an open door approach with parents to encourage parental input. This will first be discussed at the initial enrolment interview (see the centre's 'Enrolment & Fees Policy' Procedure 1.4, and the 'Initial Enrolment Interview Checklist') and will re-occur on a continuing basis in a variety of ways (see the centre's 'Educational Program & Practice Policy' Procedure 1), plus casual staff/parent conversations etc

2. It will be understood by all staff and the Committee of Management that:

- Not all parents may choose to become directly involved in the centre's day to day functioning
- Parents who are employed, may not be able to participate in all, many or any centre functions, opportunities to volunteer help etc
- Those parents who do choose to become involved will be free to choose the manner/s in which they support the centre e.g. Committee of Management membership, volunteer help in various ways, fund raising ventures, financial donations etc

3. The Educators will continually inform parents of their child's progress throughout the year. This will take various forms eg, in casual drop off/pick up chats (provided the child is unable to hear), phone conversations, private meetings with parents that may or may not be related to times when the child is being planned for on an individual basis, or in relation to things that children may be making/experiencing/showing interest in at the preschool, eg drawings, construction play, etc. (For specific details on this see the centre's 'Education Program & Practice Policy' Procedures 1, 2 & 14)

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4. All staff will respect and actively support the role that parents/guardians play in their child's upbringing and development. The Educators will provide parents with related information in a variety of ways throughout the year. This will include community links, information about local events and family support services, poster information etc
5. The centre's program will encompass aspects of the rural life of the local community in the following ways:
 - Opportunities for learning to occur during harvest, shearing and lambing. This may take the form of excursions, or inviting people into the centre to talk with the children. Where possible these visitors will be parents of children at the centre
 - Fund raising opportunities for the preschool will usually involve the local community
6. Parents and other family members are invited to share aspects of their culture and family life with the staff and children: such as creative abilities, cooking, music, dance, introducing their language (if different), bathing a new baby etc
7. Parental involvement is invited regarding the centre's administration and management in the following ways:
 - Membership of the Committee of Management
 - Review process of the centre's policies. The 3 yearly external review of policies is open to feedback from parents at Committee of Management meetings which are opened to all parents
 - Feedback from parents is continuously invited in relation to the educational program, excursions, and other aspects of daily life at the centre. This expectation for ongoing parental involvement is first established at the initial enrolment interview (see Procedure 1 above)
 - A sub committee consisting of parents and the Director advertises for and interviews new staff (see Staffing Policy, Procedures 1.2, 1.4, 1.7, 1.9)
8. Links with community bodies will be encouraged e.g. using a local gardening club to get advice about the playground plants etc. (Further examples are in the centre's 'Environmental Awareness & Sustainability Policy,' Procedures 10-14). When local community links like this are made, the information will always be shared with parents

The Director will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times.