

Quality Area 6



**Collaborative partnerships
with families and
communities**

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Discussion Point

How do you support and reassure families with children under three years of age if they are feeling nervous about using an education and care service for the first time?

Discussion Point

How do you encourage families to contribute to the service's program and to their child's experiences in ways that incorporate their cultural background?

Discussion Point

What is your service's current family enrolment and orientation process?

Could any positive changes be made to this process in order to further foster respectful, supportive relationships with families?

Discussion Point

Is your service readily prepared to communicate with families for whom literacy is an issue, or English is not a first language?

What practices are currently in place?

What organisations could you contact to access additional help?

Discussion Point

'It takes a village to raise a child'

What does this African proverb, commonly referred to in Reggio Emilia philosophy, mean to you?

Discussion Point

Who are the traditional owners of the land upon which your service is located?

If not known, how could you find out and learn about the local culture?

How could you involve children, families and the community in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into your service?

Discussion Point

Discuss the benefits of working in collaborative partnerships with families for:

- Children
- The service
- The community

Multiple Choice

Which of the following is an example of a transition in which a child may require an educator's support?

- a) Between the service and school or kindergarten/preschool
- b) Being transported between services or on an excursion
- c) Moving to another room or educator within the service
- d) All of the above**

Transitions offer opportunities and challenges. Educators should work with children, families, other professionals and the broader community to ensure successful transitions between settings and that children feel secure and confident in their learning environment (EYLF, page 17).

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Discussion Point

How do you involve families in decisions relating to their child?

What are you willing or unwilling to share decisions about?

Discussion Point

Discuss some ways in which your service engages with your local community?

For further information, see *Newsletter No# 47* at www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

Trivia Question

Question: What is 'Starting Blocks'? (www.startingblocks.gov.au)

Answer: ACECQA's *Starting Blocks* is a family-friendly resource available to help new parents answer child care questions and better understand the benefits of early childhood education and care. It offers helpful tips for parents on early childhood development, and what to look for to ensure that their child has a quality care and learning experience.

For further information, see the *Starting Blocks* website at www.startingblocks.gov.au

True or False?

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a resource readily available to the public that can support educators to better understand their community.

True. The AEDC is a data snapshot that measures children's development in their first year of school. The data is collected against five domains and measures whether children are developmentally 'on track', 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' in terms of meeting developmental milestones.

For further information, see www.aedc.gov.au

Activity



Look at your service's entrance and information area. What messages does this area send to families?

Use your device to capture an example of the entrance area that you believe communicates that the service values families' input?

Return to the group, and discuss each educator's photo.

Scenario

Maggie, who attends your service's preschool program, has advanced language development and a vast vocabulary. She has begun reading independently and enjoys dictating stories to her parents to create her own books. Maggie pays little attention to the other children in the program, and often becomes disruptive during group activities –commenting about how 'boring' it is. Maggie's family says she has started complaining about having to attend preschool – saying it is 'for babies', and have asked the educators to spend more time engaging Maggie's interest in writing stories.

How would you work collaboratively with Maggie and her family to support her ongoing inclusion in your program, and build on her strengths and interests?

Discussion Point

In an education and care service, educators must make curriculum decisions that promote inclusion and participation by all children (EYLF, page 12; FSAC, page 11).

What policies, practices and strategies are in place to support the inclusion of children:

- With additional needs?
- From cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds?
- Who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

Where might you access additional assistance to ensure that your service is 'inclusion ready'?

Scenario

The family of Lucas, a three year old boy who has been attending your service since infancy requests a meeting with his educator. They sadly inform you that their son has recently been diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy and ask your advice about local support services and assistance.

How will you respond to these parents? What services can you refer them to?

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Activity



Walk around the service and take photos of things in your service's environment that reflect:

- The lives of the children and families using the service,
- The cultural diversity of the broader community,
- Australia's rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture?

Bring them back to the group and discuss opportunities to improve on your current practices?

Activity



List the local schools in your area.

As a group, discuss opportunities to strengthen relationships between your service and relevant schools.

Brainstorm strategies you can use to work collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition for children moving from your service to school.

Discussion Point

Does your service currently use books, images and resources that reflect children and people with disabilities as active participants in the community?

If not, what kind of resources could be incorporated into your setting?

Discussion Point

Socio-cultural theorist Urie Bronfenbrenner called attention to the large number of environmental and societal influences on a child's development. He believed that family involvement in an education and care service was essential for a child's learning and development.

What strategies do you use to gather the wealth of knowledge families have about their children?

How do you document this and incorporate it into your practice?

True or False?

The approved provider, nominated supervisor or family day care educator of an education and care service must ensure that a parent of a child being educated and cared for by the service may enter the premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for by the service.

True. (Regulation 157 of the National Regulations)

Multiple Choice

The approved provider, nominated supervisor or family day care educator is not required to allow a parent to enter the education and care service premises if:

- The parent's entry would pose a risk to the safety of the children and staff of the education and care service
- The parent's entry would conflict with any duty of the provider, supervisor or educator under the Law
- The provider, supervisor or family day care educator reasonably believes that permitting the parent's entry would contravene a court order
- All of the above.**

(Regulation 157 of the National Regulations)

Discussion Point

How does your service facilitate communication with families who have specific or diverse communication needs?

Scenario

Elijah is a four year old child who has recently enrolled in your service. Elijah's mother has requested that he practice his violin for a minimum of one hour per day whilst at the service. She is happy to bring in Elijah's violin from home for him to practice with.

How would you respond to this request?