



FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Links

Education and Care Services National Regulations: 157
National Quality Standard: 6.1.1; 6.1.3; 6.2.3; 7.1.2

Policy statement

Tropics Early Learning aims to establish and maintain positive relationships between families and centre staff and management. We welcome and facilitate family participation and open communication and practice an open door policy for all families.

We value the input of families, educators, and the wider community, to help create a service that meets the needs of all children and families that utilise the Centre, and to create an environment that fosters consistency and continuity between the Centre and home environments.

Implementation

We will encourage family involvement and open communication in all areas of our Curriculum by:

Policy Development and Implementation:

- Developing enrolment and orientation processes in which families are provided with information about the philosophy, policies and practices of the Centre.
- Developing procedures in which families can be involved in the development of the Centre's Quality Improvement Plan, and policy review processes.
- Ensuring that families are notified of changes to policies or fees and given adequate notice as per the *Education and Care Services National Law*.
- Ensuring that we have a written policy, and procedures on family grievances and complaints, and ensuring that families are informed of these processes.
- Abiding by, and supporting the Association's Constitution, by inviting all Association members (this will include one guardian/carer for each child enrolled in the service) to nominate to be elected to our Management Committee on an annual basis, thereby giving all families the opportunity to become more involved in the decision-making processes of the Centre.

Programs and Children's Experiences:

- Valuing families as their child's first and most important educator, encouraging them to share their understandings, knowledge and preferences for their child.
- Encouraging family involvement in the program through feedback, spending time in the centre, sharing recipes and other cultural information, bringing items from home, and sharing information on their child's emerging interests and needs.
- Encouraging parental involvement in children's excursions, not only to assist with optimising ratios, but also to support their children's knowledge of, and engagement in their community.
- Ensuring that the educational program is available for families to access, either through an online platform, or hard copy in the child's room.
- Ensuring that families have access to documents relating to their child's developmental needs, interests and experiences, and their participation in the educational program, as well as assessments of their child's progress against the outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework or the NT Preschool Curriculum.

- Ensuring that parents/guardians are notified of any incident, injury, trauma or illness that occurs for their child while in attendance at the Centre.
- Displaying weekly menus that accurately describe meals that children will be provided with, in a place that is accessible to families.
- Having educators available for families at pick up and drop off times, to exchange information about their child.

Communication and Involvement:

- Recognising that families are often busy with many competing priorities, and considering a range of strategies that will help to build and maintain relationships with each family; e.g. the use of email for communication; encouraging parent involvement out of hours (working bees, fundraising, social gatherings, etc).
- Using different outlets for family/centre communication, such as:
 - face to face communication;
 - regular newsletters, emailed out to all families, as well as hardcopies available in the foyer;
 - notice boards at the entrance to the centre;
 - bulk messaging systems, for use in emergency or short notice situations (through the Xplor system);
 - Using the 'conversations' link in the story park platform.
 - formal and informal meetings;
 - various surveys, e.g. regarding the centre's philosophy; quality improvement; orientation; etc.
 - Utilising the online platform 'Storypark' that allows families to access, and give feedback on their child's observations, and developmental profiles, from their home computer, tablet, or smart phone.
- Accessing Translation and Interpreting services for more effective communication with non-English speaking families if necessary; contact information: 131450 or website: <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/en/Help-using-TIS-National-services/Contact-TIS-National>
- Where possible, providing key information in languages other than English (relevant to current enrolments), using interpreters, bilingual staff and translated materials.
- Ensuring that strategies are put into place where necessary to assist communication with family members who may have difficulties with literacy; such as
 - ensuring that information is provided verbally.
 - conveying messages as a sequence of illustrations.
 - providing assistance with completing any relevant forms/written communications.
 - providing information to families about opportunities to improve literacy skills, such as, contacting the Reading and Writing Hotline – 1300 6555 06.
- Ensuring that parents/guardians may enter the Centre at any time, unless such entry would pose risk to the safety of children/educators or breach court orders regarding access to children.
- Encouraging family involvement in working bees within the Centre, and fundraising events that are held throughout the year, helping to build their sense of belonging and ownership, and fostering relationships between families
- Organising family events, that all families/members are invited to attend, e.g. annual end of year celebration.

Sources: Guide to the National Quality Standard (2011); Early Years Learning Framework; Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW) (2013); Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011); <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/en>

Date of review	Modifications made	Approved
February 2023	Developed policy	May 2023