

Procedure SO:04.03

Supporting relationships and partnerships



Policy – Curriculum

Area – Operations

Document Control

Responsible Officer: General Manager Children's services	Procedure Number: SO:04.03
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Scope

This procedure, when read with the policy, provides a framework to guide all actions for the C&K Board, C&K staff, C&K Central, C&K branch services, C&K affiliate services, children, parents, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

C&K associate members are excluded from the scope of this procedure.

Introduction

Relationships are fundamental to children's learning. Relationships children experience influence how they participate in the learning environment and how they feel about themselves and others.

Collaborative partnerships involve educators working with families, other educators and professionals. Working collaboratively promotes holistic approaches and contributes to improved understanding and expectations about children's learning and development. Relationships turn into partnerships when people share the responsibility of working together to achieve common goals. (*Early Years Learning Framework, Belonging, Being, Becoming (EYLF) pg.20*).

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1.0 Principles of guiding relationships and partnerships:

- Relationships impact children's social and emotional wellbeing, and lay the foundation for quality education and care programs.
- When adults make decisions that affect children, children have the right to have their opinions taken into account. This does not mean authority is given to the child, but rather, encourages adults to listen closely and involve children in decision making. (*Convention of the Rights of the Child, Article 12*)
- Learning outcomes for children are enhanced when educators work in partnership with families.
- The quality of educator interactions significantly influences children's learning outcomes and experiences.
- Professional partnerships afford opportunities for professional development through formal and informal learning with peers.
- Collaborative partnerships between educators and professionals from other disciplines can improve outcomes for children and families.
- Utilise guiding frameworks such as the *Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (2016)* to inform strengthening relationships with children, families, colleagues and communities.

2.0 Educator responsibilities

2.1 Interactions with children

- Be actively engaged and responsive to children and support possibilities for learning through intentional teaching using both planned and spontaneous interactions.

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- Adapt communication styles to meet individual needs (e.g. one on one, small group and large group experiences).
- Support and scaffold children's engagement and enjoyment in interactions with others through promoting social justice, equity and fairness.
- Focus on what a child can do now, what they can do when supported and what it could look like in the future. This *strengths-based approach* builds on the child's sense of identity and wellbeing.
- Provide children with real opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings.
- Model pro-social behaviours such as sharing, turn taking, co-operating, initiating interactions, and build an understanding of empathy.
- Actively support children to resolve conflict through talking, modelling and listening to others.
- Be calm, respectful and considered when responding to children's behaviours by maintaining a calm voice and demeanour.
- Use positive behaviour guidance strategies that focus on developing self-regulation.
- Demonstrate an understanding of age appropriate expectations as well as children's individual needs, and social and cultural backgrounds.
- Gently guide and support children when their behaviour escalates. Calmly talk through the situation by offering an invitation, a request and then a choice (e.g. *Would you like me to help you or would you like to do this yourself?*).
- Use listening as a basis for interactions by giving full attention to children's communication, by suspending judgement and pausing in conversation to allow children an opportunity to respond.
- Be open to the multiple ways in which children communicate (e.g. language, eye contact, gestures, cues etc.).
- Be welcoming and responsive when children want to be 'close'.
- Ensure children have a voice in their learning through providing opportunities for them to make choices and plans for their play.
- Include intentional teaching opportunities by sensitively responding to and extending on children's ideas and thinking.
- Where practical, take a short break if feeling overwhelmed and / or ask a colleague for support.
- Use professional and appropriate language when communicating with children. Adjust language to be responsive to a child's age, learning needs and understanding.

2.2 Interactions with families

- Acknowledge and honour family diversity by building trusting relationships that respect cultural, spiritual and lifestyle choices.
- Ensure families are welcomed as partners in their child's learning and feel a sense of belonging.
- Give careful consideration to families who may enter the service feeling isolated and alienated. Demonstrate understanding that past experiences may affect a family's ability to develop and contribute to relationships.
- Consult with families regarding the cultural appropriateness of the learning community. Invite families to contribute to the program and share in children's investigations, passions and discoveries.
- Keep families informed and encourage them to contribute to decision making about their child's learning. Communication may include informal interactions at arrival and departure times or more formal engagement such as through pre-arranged meetings.

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Formal meetings with families should occur at least twice per year to share children's progress and discuss goals for future learning.

- Actively seek family feedback about their child's experiences and learning (e.g. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) contributions, feedback box, surveys).
- When required, provide families with relevant information regarding support agencies, training, specialists, counselling and / or funding to promote access and participation.

2.3 Interactions with community

- Gain local knowledge (including traditional knowledge) and work collaboratively with the local community.
- Advocate and raise awareness of issues impacting children, families and the education and care sector.
- Utilise the *Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)* (and other community data) to inform curriculum planning and strengthen local community networks.
- When appropriate mentor other educators, students and volunteers.
- Ensure information regarding support agencies / community services is prominently displayed and shared with families.
- Collaborate and build partnerships with local agencies and professionals to support positive experiences, transitions and outcomes for children and families.
- When available and appropriate, participate in community stakeholder meetings and respect the diverse perspectives and knowledge of other professionals.

3.0 Responsibilities of families

- Share relevant information with educators about their child's experiences, interests and needs.
- Respect the diversity and differences of children, families and staff.
- Carefully consider the advice and support of educators and other professional partners.
- At all times, follow the *C&K Parental Code of Conduct*.
- Respect and comply with reasonable requests of staff.
- Follow the *CO:05 Policy Complaint Management* when raising concerns or complaints.

Links to associated documents

CO:05	<i>Policy - Complaint Management</i>
Internal publication	<i>C&K Parental Code of Conduct</i>

Acknowledgements and references

- Australian Government: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace, 2009. *Belonging, being and becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. 1st ed. Canberra: Australian Government.
- C&K, 2011. *Building waterfalls: A guideline for children's learning and for teaching in kindergarten*. 2nd ed. Brisbane: C&K.
- C&K, 2011. *Building waterfalls: A guideline for educators living and learning with children aged birth to three years*. 2nd ed. Brisbane: C&K.
- Queensland Studies Authority, 2010. *Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline*. 1st ed. Queensland: Queensland Government.
- Early Childhood Australia (2016) Code of Ethics. <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/>
- ECA, 2012. National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program. *Relationships with Children*. Australian Government DEEWR

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- The National Quality Standard, Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
- UN, 1990. Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Australian Early Development Census, 2014-2015. Commonwealth of Australia <http://www.aedc.gov.au/>

Revision Record					
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