

CHCECE050

Work in partnership with children's families

I am going to
and I know
ride my
bike. I
have my
the
doll



Learner Guide



Updated to include
National Quality
Framework changes

Aspire
Learning Resources

CHCECE050

Work in partnership with children's families

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 2.1



CHCECE050 Work in partnership with children's families, Release 1

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Aspire Learning Resources
Supporting Vocational Education and Training for 30 years
1991 to 2023

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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE050 Work in partnership with children's families*, Release 1.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. Information regarding how this Learner Guide relates to this unit of competency is detailed in our mapping guide.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.
Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There are Learning Checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

This table maps each topic in this Learner Guide to the National Quality Standard and national learning framework: Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

T = Topic

Topics	National Quality Standard (NQS)
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
T1-T3	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	Early Years Learning Framework
	Principles
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
T1-T3	Partnerships
T1-T3	Respect for diversity
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
	Equity, inclusion and high expectations
	Sustainability
	Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
	Collaborative leadership and teamwork
	Practice
	Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Play-based learning and intentionality
	Learning environments
T1-T3	Cultural responsiveness
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing
	Learning Outcomes
	1. Children have a strong sense of identity
	2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	4. Children are confident and involved learners
	5. Children are effective communicators



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

- 1A** Family-focused environments
- 1B** Welcoming new families

Establishing relationships with families

Best practice in education and care can only be achieved if the whole child is cared for.

This means that families must be involved and participate in developing care practices and exchanging information. Orientation is an excellent time for commencing this relationship and gathering information that supports inclusion.

1A Family-focused environments

A welcoming environment can be created through your attitudes and actions.

When families are acknowledged, they are assisted to create a sense of belonging. Acknowledgement can occur through the use of photos, paintings and posters of families, familiar places and images.

Families will feel more comfortable when there are:

- familiar procedures
- newsletters
- comfortable spaces to sit and talk
- facilities to make refreshments (such as water, tea and coffee)
- noticeboards/spaces for displaying news/celebrations
- an office or area available for confidential discussions
- strategies for involving families in the service.



Try to make the family feel welcome at the service.

National Quality Framework

Educators must be familiar with the National Quality Framework (NQF).

The NQF consists of a number of components, including:

- Education and Care Services National Law
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- National Quality Standard (NQS)
- approved learning frameworks *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF) and *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTOF).

These components include details about the importance of the relationship between education and care services and families.

Element 6.1.2 of the NQS states that the expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families should be respected and that families should share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing. This element links directly to the EYLF Principle: Partnerships. The stronger the connection between an education and care service and the child's home, the greater the ability for the child to thrive.

Access and navigate through the NQS and EYLF, and apply the information as required to ensure you can work effectively in partnership with families to provide appropriate education and care for children. You can read more about the NQS and EYLF at: aspirelr.link/nqf-guide.

Family-centred practice

The NQS and EYLF have been developed with a family-centred practice approach.

This approach regards family members as the experts on their own family and recognises that they have the right to determine what is most important for their child. As an educator, you have a responsibility to keep family members informed with up-to-date, accurate and reliable information. When families have this information, they can prioritise their needs according to their own family situation.

A family-centred service responds to families by:

- implementing strategies to meet family needs and requests, including providing additional or alternative services and/or adapting the curriculum, routines and information to suit the families using the service
- training and supporting staff so they can be family-centred – this may occur by reducing barriers and limitations to communication, and ensuring that communication and the information provided is consistent
- providing information to families so they can be prepared to participate fully if they choose
- formally adopting family-centred practice in service delivery by incorporating the principles into the policies, procedures, philosophy and practice.

Whole of community parenting

An extension of the family-centred approach is the theory of parenting called 'whole of community parenting'.

This theory focuses on the belief that it benefits both families and society if children are supported and cared for by the whole community.

Your service is part of this community as it shares education and care roles with families. Benefits are seen when children are:

- valued by their whole community
- included in community decisions that affect them
- encouraged to express themselves and participate in community activities
- protected from harm
- helped to reach their full potential.

Ecological approach

According to the ecological approach, the community and any connecting or influencing forces impact on all aspects of a child's development.

This theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, relates to the wider view of belonging and shows how the child is impacted by various connections.

The connecting or influencing forces that may impact a child and their sense of belonging include:

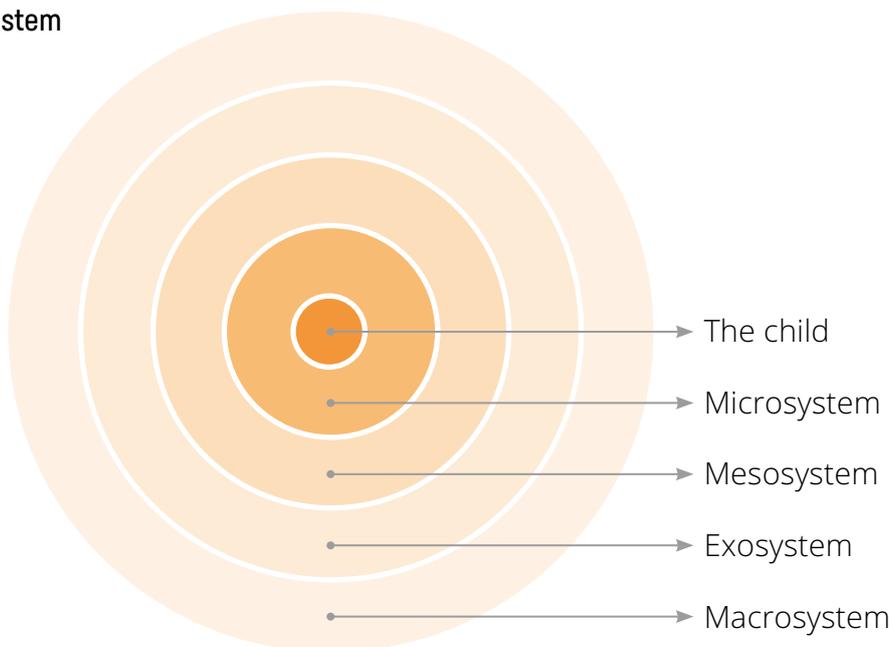
- family members, carers, educators, babysitters and relations that make up the child's world
- culture and traditions of family members, carers, educators and the community
- events that occur in the family and community
- settings and their values
- parent workplaces and conditions
- government decisions and laws.

The ecological approach highlights the need for you to recognise the broader situation of each child, their family and the other influences in their lives. Consider how these affect the child's needs when it comes to helping them feel a sense of belonging. The ecological approach is represented by structures that comprise central forces that influence the child, as described in the following table.

Ecological structure	What this includes	Some examples
Microsystem (‘micro’ means small)	Relationships that include face-to-face interaction between the child and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Home ➤ Education and care service ➤ Play group ➤ Relatives ➤ Friends
Mesosystem (‘meso’ means in the middle)	Relationships between two or more settings that the child is involved in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Education and care service and parents ➤ Kindergarten and education and care service ➤ Relatives and parents
Exosystem (‘exo’ means outside or external)	The child does not directly participate in these relationships or settings, but they have a direct influence on the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Parent’s workplace and associated conditions ➤ Community support services ➤ Support organisations ➤ Government
Macrosystem (‘macro’ means large)	These systems influence the culture and beliefs of the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Religion ➤ Laws ➤ Customs ➤ Barriers
Chronosystem (‘chrono’ means time)	The time frame in which the child’s life is set; for example, 2021 or 2023.	

The ecological theory is usually depicted in a circular diagram such as the following.

Chronosystem



 Practice Task 1

1. Which of the following aspects of the NQF relate to collaborative partnerships with families and the community? Select all that apply.

- EYLF Outcome 6.1.2
- EYLF Principle Partnerships
- EYLF Practice Play-based learning and intentionality
- NQS Element 6.1.2
- NQS Quality area 3

2. Briefly explain why the ecological theory is important in understanding the value of family/educator relationships.

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1B Welcoming new families

When a family is seeking an education and care service, they may already understand how this type of environment works or may have no idea about its function and operation.

Despite their level of understanding, most families have similar questions and concerns. It is with this in mind that most service staff are able to develop a procedure for introducing new families.

A family that is greeted, spoken to, provided information, asked questions and given genuine attention will find it easier to relax and will gain a sense of confidence in leaving their child at the service. They will be more likely to share information about family needs and events.



Make sure new families feel welcome as first impressions are crucial to establishing an ongoing relationship.

First impressions are crucial to the ongoing relationship you develop with each family. When meeting families for the first time, greet them with a friendly smile. Speak clearly and use words and terms they will understand. Be sincere in your welcome with positive body language that matches your words. As you learn about them, adapt your communication to meet their cultural and personal needs; for example, you might find out or notice that they avoid eye contact, prefer personal space or seek information that they can read or see. Making families feel comfortable in the service environment encourages them to speak freely and provide you with the information you need.

As part of your welcome, emphasise the service's understanding of the importance of the parenting role and your commitment to caring for their child while they are in your care.

Positive impressions

Be aware of the impression you and your service are making on both prospective and existing families.

This is known as 'impression management'. You should be working toward giving a clear impression that you are providing a family-centred practice and that you value whole of community parenting.

Impression management is important at all times, and it should be a true indication of everyday practice. When families are shown through your service for the first time and throughout an orientation, they collect a massive amount of verbal and non-verbal information and begin to form an impression of the environment and how well it is suited to their child and family.

The following table outlines some common behaviours, actions and other aspects that families may look for when developing their impressions of the service. This information may influence a family's beliefs about whether your service can meet their needs.

Behaviour and actions of staff

- Greeting and farewelling other families and children
- Smiling
- Supporting children's behaviour positively and consistently
- Showing a positive attitude
- Reacting to children's emotions
- Answering children's questions
- Helping children with activities and routines
- Being warm and caring, and showing interest in their child as an individual
- Listening to families and respecting their wishes
- Being enthusiastic and lively

Aspects of the service

- A bright and interesting environment
- Close to home/work/public transport
- A positive and happy atmosphere
- Family involvement is encouraged
- Lots of interesting equipment and activities are provided
- Already has many children enrolled from the family's cultural or language background
- Has a multicultural focus
- Operating hours meet the family's needs

Example**First impressions**

Sonya is working in the reception area when she notices a new family approaching the front door. Sonya greets the family at the door with a big smile, warmly introduces herself and offers assistance.

The parents introduce themselves and inform Sonya that their child's name is Dawson and he is three years old. Sonya crouches down to Dawson's eye level and says, 'Hi Dawson, I'm Sonya. It's lovely to meet you'.

Sonya takes the family on a tour through all areas of the service. Educators introduce themselves and talk to Dawson as he engages in activities and experiences. Sonya informs the family of how the service operates and spends time getting to know them and their family's needs. Sonya includes the kitchen in her tour, as she has learnt from her questions that Dawson has allergies. This gives the family a chance to talk about the menu and includes the cook in the discussion of menu options to suit Dawson.

At the end of the tour the family asks to enrol. Sonya arranges the orientation details, then, as the family leaves, Sonya provides them with a welcome bag that contains information, including policies, fees, newsletters and enrolment requirements. There is also a bottle of bubbles for Dawson.



Enrolment and orientation

Attending an education and care service for the first time or moving to a new service is a significant transition for a child and their family.

Each child and family will adapt and accommodate to changes at a different rate and in a different manner. It will always take time and trust to reach a stage where a new routine is understood, becomes predictable and is looked forward to.

An orientation is part of an enrolment process. It is a time for family members, the child and the educator to get to know each other, exchange information and begin to develop a relationship. An orientation process may span a number of days or weeks, and usually includes a period where a family member stays and an educator observes. Some children will feel comfortable right away; others may require a few weeks to settle in. The age and developmental stage of a child, the child's experiences and temperament, and the needs and abilities of the family influence the process.

Collecting information

Collect information about the child's individual routines, patterns and preferences so you can respond to their needs.

Exchange of information allows family members and educators to provide for the child by taking into consideration knowledge of what has happened while they are not present.

Details might include:

- cultural requirements
- expectations of the family
- developmental abilities
- additional support needs
- play needs and interests
- preferred toys and activities
- preferred levels of social interaction
- food and drink preferences, experiences and needs
- sleeping and rest patterns
- health status
- daily physical care routines.

The following table outlines some things you may need to ask about.

Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Who forms part of the family? ➤ Who will come into the service? ➤ How old are the siblings? ➤ What values and beliefs does the family have that influences the care and education of the child? ➤ What are the interests of the family?
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Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What does the child eat? ➤ How much do they eat? ➤ Do they have any food allergies or intolerances? ➤ What are their cultural diet requirements?
Sleep or rest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does the child rest or sleep during the day? ➤ What times and how many times a day do they sleep? ➤ What comfort items do they use? ➤ Are there any settling requirements or challenges? ➤ How is the child usually settled? ➤ What is the normal length of sleep or rest during the day?
Medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does the child take medication? ➤ What are their signs of illness?
Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does the child usually settle easily in new environments? ➤ What signs alert you to distress? ➤ What are the child's cues; for example, how you know they are hungry, tired, anxious, etc.?

Child-rearing and parenting styles

Past experience, values and beliefs play a major role in child-rearing and parental expectations.

To develop strong relationships with others, you need to respect the diversity of child-rearing practices and parenting styles by understanding that upbringing, education and values may cause people to see the world in different ways that influence their relationships, behaviours and social expectations.

By thinking about your own beliefs in an open way, you can find out about yourself, which will help you understand other people.

Reflect on your experience and how it influences you by thinking about these questions:

- Do I treat all people with respect and understanding?
- Do I take the time to ask about child-rearing practices and parenting styles?
- Am I able to interact with a variety of individuals, regardless of their beliefs?
- Do I have any biases that I need to work on?
- Are the expectations I have for children, staff, families and others based on my or their practices and expectations?
- How do I feel about my own perspectives and life experiences?
- Do I have a realistic set of goals and objectives?
- Are my own child-rearing and parenting styles influenced by positive or negative experiences?

Some strategies to help you value different needs and beliefs in order to provide appropriate education and care to children include:

- asking families what is important to them
- not assuming all families will want the same things
- doing research to follow up on topics that are important to families

- asking questions to gain a greater understanding of new or unfamiliar concepts
- sharing details of the curriculum or service so families can contribute their opinions and ideas.

Common areas that child-rearing and parenting styles influence, include:

- behaviour expectations
- routine choices
- food choices
- attitudes to learning.

Some families will have similar expectations to you; other families may have opposing expectations.

Our first guide to parenting is based on our own experiences as children. We might view our experiences as positive, effective, culturally expected, questionable, negative or abusive. Many parents fall back on their own parent's actions repeat these regardless of the outcomes. Other parents may disagree with their upbringing or might even disagree with the strategies of their partner; they might try new strategies agreed together, or continue to maintain alternative expectations within their own household. Some parents will be motivated to learn and develop as their children do, starting their own family ideas and directions. They may watch and listen to the ideas of educators, they might research, or attend parenting support and education opportunities.

The temperament and personality of a child might influence parenting choices. Expectations that have previously been effective and acceptable may not work with an individual child, the size of the family may not allow this to continue, or the strategy might cause disruption.

Sometimes new strategies must be learnt to create a family focussed approach that works for each family member. This might include such things as deciding on:

- family dietary choices when children have allergies
- behaviour expectations when new challenges are faced
- new routines when a family member is ill or changes a work schedule.

Continue to exchange information with families so that their child-rearing and parenting style needs are acknowledged, respected, and where suited, incorporated into the service.

Orientation information

As an educator, you will provide information to families about the service.

To help families feel welcome and encourage them to participate in the service community, families need to be aware of:

- the service's values
- how an education and care program is developed
- the type of activities provided
- the role of the educators
- the role of families

- communication and decision-making strategies
- the age and number of children catered for
- hours
- policies and procedures
- timetabling
- meals
- safety issues.

Families need to know basic information such as the age and number of children catered for, hours, policies and procedures, timetabling, meals and safety issues.

The following table highlights what families may wish to know about.

Questions about the service	Questions about the children	Questions about the educator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How much will education and care cost? What does that cost cover? ➤ What are the facilities like? (They should be shown through the service) ➤ What safety and security precautions are in place? ➤ What days is the service closed? ➤ Can they come into the service at any time to see or pick up their child? ➤ Can they call if they want to know how their child is going? ➤ How long can they stay at the service when they drop off their child? ➤ What do they need to bring each day? ➤ Can they come in to breastfeed their child? ➤ Do they need to supply baby's formula? Do they need to make it up first? ➤ How can they be more involved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Will the child's values and specific needs be met? ➤ How are emerging skills identified and catered for? ➤ How are play and learning catered for? ➤ How are the goals and objectives of each child met? ➤ What is the policy on caring for sick children? ➤ How do you adequately supervise children? ➤ What is your policy and procedure about children's accidents? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are your qualifications and experience? ➤ How long have you been at the service? ➤ Do you enjoy your job? ➤ How can you manage so many children at once? ➤ What is the ratio of staff to children? ➤ How do you decide what experiences to provide?

Family members should be shown the spaces their children will use and any noticeboard or communication areas where important information is shared. Depending on your service, they may be shown a variety of indoor and outdoor areas. Families may benefit from viewing kitchen and utility areas to gain confidence in how health and safety is managed.

Service information

Depending on your service's management type, families may be involved in different levels and aspects of the service.

They may ask for or personally access their own information and general service information, or be responsible for developing and approving information. Service details in relation to the following should be available to all families:

- Service guidelines (policies and procedures)
- Legislation/regulations
- Menus
- Educators on duty
- Responsible people
- Curriculum and routines
- Activities planned for the child
- Documentation about children's learning and development (following privacy and confidentiality requirements)
- Standards, including the service's quality improvement plan
- Responsibilities of the Board of Management (if the service has one)

Families may be interested in how the service operates from a practical point of view. This may be communicated during an orientation process, on a website or on social media. Other methods of sharing information are outlined in the following table.

Information	Details	Some ways these might be shared
Service characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Utilities available ➤ Room ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Noticeboard ➤ Posters ➤ Newsletters
Staff overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff numbers and qualifications ➤ Roles ➤ Strengths ➤ Background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussions ➤ Noticeboard ➤ Newsletters
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Legislative ➤ Organisational structure ➤ Service level structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meetings ➤ Poster ➤ Newsletters
Mission, vision, theories and philosophies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How they were developed ➤ What they mean ➤ Why they exist ➤ How to contribute to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussions ➤ Displays
Government programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fee assistance ➤ Utilisation programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Brochures ➤ Fliers ➤ Newsletters

Information	Details	Some ways these might be shared
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recent government changes ➤ Finances ➤ Fees ➤ Funding bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Newsletters ➤ Discussions ➤ Meetings
Industrial relations involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Membership of unions or other worker support bodies ➤ Which award your wages are paid under 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussions ➤ Meetings
Memberships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Providing research ➤ Linking to best practice ➤ Advising on specific situations or information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resource library ➤ Displays ➤ Newsletters
Training, education and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Who is training ➤ Why they are training ➤ What the training levels mean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussions ➤ Newsletters ➤ Meetings ➤ Displays

When families understand the curriculum, they are better able to relate to you and share information about their children. This helps you work in a collaborative relationship in which you and the family regularly make decisions together. It ensures that families will confidently discuss requests and share their concerns. This involvement is part of providing a quality, responsive program.

Roles of government

Families may be interested in ways the government is involved in the operation of the service.

The Australian Government is responsible for education and care services through the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE).

They enact the following laws and regulations that lead to the development of each state and territory jurisdiction:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations

They arrange funding under the following legislation:

- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017

Called the Child Care Package, this commonwealth funding includes the Child Care Subsidy. Families apply for the Child Care Subsidy through Centrelink, who assess their eligibility. The family's fee is then identified based on this assessment and the subsidy is paid directly to the service.

Families may find additional details and current information at the following sites:

- Child Care Package: aspirelr.link/early-childhood-and-child-care
- Child Care Package frequently asked questions for families: aspirelr.link/childcare-faq

The Child Care Provider Handbook leads education and care services in their application process.

Further to government roles, state/territory and local governments play a large part in operations.

State and territory governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Follow the direction of an Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations and create jurisdictionally appropriate legislation ➤ Enforce education and care service laws and regulations through regulatory authorities situated in regions ➤ Support educators through education and funding programs ➤ Provide funding and grants for building and development works
Local governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Planning controls ➤ Working with children checks and child protection laws ➤ Health department rules ➤ Food safety requirements ➤ Local funding and grants for special projects

Education and care regulatory authorities, under state and territory government, are responsible for:

- submitting application and notification forms
- provider and service applications and approvals
- supervisor certificates (in WA only)
- temporary and service waivers
- assessment and rating
- compliance
- state or territory specific transition and savings provisions.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is an independent national authority that assists commonwealth, state and territory governments to administer the National Quality Framework (NQF).



Practice Task 2

1. Which of the following statements are correct about welcoming new families? Select all that apply.
 - Educators should build rapport by creating a warm, welcoming environment for new families that reflects the values, cultural customs and philosophies of the service, the family and educators.
 - Families should choose whether to participate in orientation. If they decide not to participate, the educators will figure out the child's needs themselves.
 - Services should provide current and accurate information about all aspects of the service, and encourage families to participate and share their knowledge, skills and expertise. This may include the role of the government in service provision.
 - Educators will build rapport with families if they demonstrate that they are capable and can care for the child without needing to ask family members for information or advice.
 - The child-rearing practices and parenting styles of families are interesting. Although the service is unable to incorporate these values and beliefs, educators can learn a lot by finding out this information and comparing it to their own experiences.

2. Which of the following are correct about government tiers and services? Select all that apply.
 - Parents are provided fee relief through the Commonwealth government Child Care Package.
 - Families contact their local government run Centrelink office to check their eligibility for the Child Care Subsidy.
 - State and territory governments enforce education and care service laws and regulations through regulatory authorities situated in regions.
 - Local government is responsible for food safety requirements.

Summary

- A welcoming environment can be created through your attitudes and actions.
- A family-centred approach, as outlined in the NQS and EYLF, involves genuine partnerships with family members in which educators and families value each other and share the knowledge they have of the child.
- An orientation is part of an enrolment process. It is a time for family members, the child and educator to get to know each other, share information and begin to develop a relationship.

Learning Checkpoint 1

Establishing relationships with families

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Dawn is preparing all information that she will need to give to the new family at orientation. When the family arrives, Dawn opens the door with a smile. 'Hello, welcome to our room,' Dawn says, making eye contact with Russell's mother, Angie, as she enters. Dawn gets down to Russell's eye level and says, 'Hi Russell, my name is Dawn and we have been looking forward to you visiting. What do you like to play with?'

Following discussion with Angie, Dawn finds out more about Russell, including:

- Russell is four years old and will attend the service three days a week.
- Russell lives at home with his mum and his older brother, Nathan, who is eight years old.
- Angie will drop Nathan at school near their home before bringing Russell to the service.
- Angie works at the local supermarket.
- While Russell never stays overnight with his father, he is a big part of his life and they spend lots of time together. Russell's father will pick him up sometimes.
- Nathan plays football and Russell goes with his dad to watch him at training on a Monday night. They have dinner in the clubrooms with other members of the team.
- The whole family attend church every Sunday. Following this they go to their grandparent's house for a family lunch. Russell plays with his cousins.

1. Which of the following things should Dawn have prepared so she is able to provide Angie with current and accurate service information? Select all that apply.

- Enrolment form
- This week's menu
- A letter from the government explaining their role
- Most recent newsletter
- Parent handbook
- Staff handbook

2. Which of the following questions will be useful in helping Dawn understand more about Russell? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Does Russell have any allergies? What types of food does he like to eat the most at home? | * Yes | * No |
| b. Does Russell have any special comfort items? | * Yes | * No |
| c. What sort of car do you drive? | * Yes | * No |
| d. Is Russell able to use the toilet? | * Yes | * No |
| e. What is Russell's favourite toy at home? | * Yes | * No |
| f. Which television programs does Russell like watching? | * Yes | * No |

3. Read the following statement, then select true or false.

Dawn is required to follow NQS Element 6.1.2. This states that the expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families should be respected and families should share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

* True * False

4. Match each aspect of Russell's life on the left to the system structure of the ecological approach on the right.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| * National Quality Framework (NQF) | * Microsystem |
| * Current year | * Mesosystem |
| * Nathan's mother, Angie | * Exosystem |
| * Education and care service | * Macrosystem |
| * Nathan's school | * Chronosystem |

5. Who would be involved in Russell's care and education from the perspective of the whole of community parenting approach? Select all that apply.

- Nathan's football coach
- Educators at the service
- Staff at the supermarket
- Nathan's mother, Angie
- Russell's grandparents
- Nathan's school teachers

6. Read the following question, then select true or false.

If Angie wanted to know more about her fee subsidy, Dawn would refer her to the local government office * True * False



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

- 2A** Communication techniques
- 2B** Collaborative relationships
- 2C** Questions, concerns and requests
- 2D** Involving families and communities

Partnerships with families

The open communication you establish by managing communication effectively and courteously helps families to share their needs and issues.

They are also more likely to do so in a positive way as part of their partnership with you. By establishing positive relationships, families will feel more confident sharing milestones and events, and participating in your service.

Collaboration is essential in a family-centred approach as you are in a partnership with the family, supporting each other and working together towards a common goal by exchanging knowledge and learning, and building consensus.

2A Communication techniques

Aim to respond to questions, concerns and requests promptly, accurately and courteously, and encourage families to participate in service activities.

Communicating well is a crucial skill that helps you to achieve this. Communication skills include:

- excellent writing, speaking and presentation skills
- knowledge of the service and children who attend
- good people skills; that is, being able to relate to a variety of people and communities
- strong organisational skills.

The communication methods you use with families include informal chats and discussions, and formal methods such as enrolment forms, enrolment interviews and meetings.



You should communicate clearly and respond to any concerns family members may have.

Tips for involving families

- Schedule meetings with families and the child to establish goals and communicate any changes in the service.
- Listen to families when they tell you about their child's strengths and how they learn.
- Ensure educators have access to phones, apps, social media or email to communicate with families during the day.
- Ensure families know the phone numbers or email addresses of the service and how to access any apps, websites or social media.
- Try to communicate with family members who do not normally attend the service; for example, if a child's father always drops off and picks up the child, try to communicate with the child's mother as well.
- Provide families with structured ways to comment on the service's communications; for example, by email, phone or take-home surveys.
- Speak to families directly (this does not include leaving messages on an answering machine).
- Provide copies of service information in a variety of ways, such as in handbooks or online.

There is a fine line between attempting to increase your relationship with a family through communication, and disrespecting their involvement choices or abilities by pressuring them. To ensure you are being respectful, always:

- assess the level of participation a family is prepared to have, based on their situation and level of involvement
- watch for body language; this may indicate that the person is having their cultural communication needs met, not interested, in a hurry or needs to tell you something
- consider your message and how it may affect or influence the person.

Clear communication

Clear communication occurs when the strategies you use to send messages from one person to another meet each person's needs.

When you first meet a family, your ability to assess and address their communication needs helps you to develop a clear and open relationship. If you neglect to do this, you will find it much more difficult to alter the communication relationship later on.

Consider the communication areas described in the following table.

Interpretation or translation	The family may need assistance from an interpreter or translator so they are clear about the information you wish to share and so you know they understand. If you address this early, you will avoid issues later through misunderstandings or lack of information.
Being approachable	When you act like an expert and never exchange information with the family, you build a wall that stops effective communication. Families may feel they are being belittled or that their role is not valued. To ensure this happens, develop a professional, friendly and approachable manner.
Timing	<p>You may find it challenging to coordinate communication with families at a convenient time. A daily curriculum may not allow specific time for family discussion even though this should be a priority.</p> <p>While it may not always be possible to arrange individual or private time to talk to families, create a contingency plan that includes ways you may be able to organise your time so that this can happen on a regular basis or when needed.</p>
Information to share	Identify information that is appropriate to share with families and what information is confidential. If you are unsure, ask for clarification when you commence employment or seek advice from a supervisor before you share information with families.
How messages can be relayed	<p>There are many methods of sharing information (e.g. discussion, newsletters, noticeboards, apps, social media, websites and emails), but no single method will meet the needs of every family.</p> <p>Individuals learn and take in information in different ways, so you must provide a range of communication methods to ensure your messages are received, especially when families have language difficulties.</p> <p>Cater for people who prefer to learn by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ listening ➤ reading or seeing information ➤ doing, experiencing or being shown something. <p>You should cater for people who have poor English skills, including those who have poor reading skills.</p>

Communication strategies

Communication allows you to convey messages and to hear the messages of others.

When you speak clearly and in a language that families are familiar with, everyone understands what you are asking and why you need the information. This helps to build rapport and respect.

To communicate effectively you need to do more than just talk to someone; it requires effective listening, clear language and positive body language, as well as an ability to accept others' right to express their points of view.

To be an effective communicator, use methods that are positive, respectful, person-centred, empowering and responsive. Positive communication promotes the dignity and rights of the person being communicated with. Empowering language focuses on the person, their goals and positive attributes.

An overview of the key characteristics and advantages of effective communication and listening is shown here.

Effective listening

- Actively listen to what the other person has to say.
- Understand and read non-verbal signals, such as body language and facial expressions.
- Use active, reflective and open-ended questions.
- Recognise the signs of potential conflict.

Effective communication

- Indicate that you value the other person.
- Show respect.
- Help to build rapport.
- Assist in developing a trusting relationship.
- Give the other person confidence that their perspective is valid and is being heard.
- Help to resolve conflict.

Active listening

Listening is perhaps the most fundamental of communication skills and is vital to empathetic understanding.

The most effective listening technique is active rather than passive. Active listening involves all your communication skills as you focus on what the other person is saying.

Use verbal language to reflect and acknowledge what their discussion is about, and use body language to demonstrate a positive and open attitude. Body language is often displayed subconsciously; check that the message being communicated with words matches the message being sent using actions, as people may say one thing but express another with their body language. The tone, pitch and the rate at which a person speaks can also be indicators of a person's emotional state.

Below is a summary of the key features and tips on listening actively.

Key features of active listening

- Paraphrasing – Reflecting back verbally, the content and feelings of the other person.
- Summarising – Repeating what the person said in a few words. This gives the person the opportunity to correct your understanding.

Tips for active listening

- Briefly recap the speaker's message in your own words.
- Soften your summary with phrases like, 'You feel ...', 'It sounds like you ...', 'You think ...', 'It seems to you that ...'
- Try to use paraphrasing statements more than using questions. Allow sufficient time and pauses for the speaker to add to what they are saying.
- If more than one feeling is expressed, focus on the most prominent one.
- Use neutral words, body language and tone of voice.

Interpersonal skills

Well-developed interpersonal skills allow you to promote cooperative work practices and enhance relationships.

Interpersonal skills differ from communication skills. Communication involves reading, writing, listening and speaking – all of which you need. Interpersonal skills adapt these communication skills to manage relationships and situations so they do not escalate into conflict, misunderstandings or disagreements.

To promote cooperative workplace relationships:

- be aware of the needs of others
- treat everyone with integrity, respect, empathy and understanding
- always consider how your actions and words will be perceived by others
- critically evaluate and reflect on your work and social behaviour.

When communicating with families, remember to use the following techniques.

Inform families and give enough information

- Prepare appropriately and check that you are clear about information.
- Always respond promptly to questions and requests.
- Never wait until the last minute to tell families something. Keep everyone up to date and give families the chance to think about issues and events. This allows them to prepare, consider their thoughts, ask questions and address issues positively.
- Tell families everything they need to know to make a decision or to feel comfortable about a situation. If the information is negative, do not leave out the parts you have concerns about.
- Present the information positively and openly in a variety of ways that suit each family.
- Be aware of issues and questions that may arise so you can be ready to respond in a positive manner.

Be consistent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Demonstrate consistency by following through. ➤ Have clear expectations and support all families fairly. ➤ Be flexible to each family and consider their requests and concerns in an open way.
Have realistic expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Remember that the role of a parent or guardian is demanding, and draws on many areas of skills and knowledge. The family member must balance this demanding role and any others they undertake outside of the family. ➤ Things that may seem very important to you may seem irrelevant to a family member who may be focused on getting from one place to another on time and on completing a range of tasks.

Communication needs

Rapport and respect can be built through the use of communication techniques that are clear and supportive.

Take your communication cues from each family by watching how they communicate with you and looking for examples of what they expect or feel comfortable with. Provide a welcome that mirrors the values, cultural customs and philosophies of the service, yourself and the family member.

The communication actions you provide for one individual may not make another feel welcome; for example, one family member may enjoy eye contact and jovial discussion, another might avoid eye contact and be serious in their communications. Think about the language you need to use, how your body language affects communication and the things that make each family member feel important and considered.

When welcoming a family member who speaks a language other than English or requires cultural communication different from your own, take the following actions:

- Find out everything you need to know about the family member's language, culture and traditions.
- Make an effort to show people you are happy they are using your service.
- Use an interpreter and/or translator if required; this may be a phone service, another person such as a colleague or family member, or a language app.
- Provide information in the family member's language if possible.
- Develop resources in languages common to the community.
- Provide information in a variety of ways (e.g. verbally, written and demonstrated) to enable those of all abilities to understand.
- Ask about cultural practices and expectations early so you know how to communicate appropriately and consider the child's culture when preparing activities.
- Follow your organisational standards, policies and procedures.

Providing information in home languages

Ensure that families from non-English-speaking backgrounds are provided with relevant information in their home language.

For example, if possible, have a newsletter translated into a family's home language so they can keep up to date with important information. Using appropriate language and communication mediums will encourage families to get involved, and ensures the child is able to participate in activities.

Be aware that some family members may have poor reading skills, whatever language they speak, so notices and newsletters may not catch their attention or be an appropriate medium for providing information. In this case, direct verbal communication should be used to ensure the message has been received and understood.

Translator and interpreter services

Your service may need to translate important information into languages other than English or provide an interpreter.

An interpreter may be needed for a family who has recently migrated to Australia whose first language is not English.



You may need to use an interpreter or a translator to translate important information.

A translator converts text from one language to another. This might include enrolment documents, newsletters, forms or records. An interpreter translates speech from one language to another, which includes oral speech into sign language.

When these situations arise, your local community will have both translator references and interpreter services you can contact to assist with this transition. All families need to have equal access to relevant information, no matter what language they speak.

You can use online translation programs in general discussion. Some programs will translate text to speech, allowing you to hear pronunciation. These programs are great for translating single words or basic phrases, but are not suited to be used as a tool for a conversation where important details are being exchanged.

Ways you might use an interpreter

- To identify and discuss family values, needs and expectations
- To exchange information with the family about the child; particularly during the child's first few weeks at the service when understanding and relationships are being formed
- To begin to interpret and understand specific signs or gestures that a child is using to convey their needs

Different types of interpreters are available, including community members, parents or family members, other educators or staff within the service and those provided by government bodies.

The time, limitations, availability and skills of interpreters will vary considerably. When using an interpreter, understand their role and what it is you will be asking of them. Planning and goal-setting ensures that the time they spend with you is used adequately and efficiently.

Using staff and educators within the service provides comfort and reassurance to the child and family. If you have a staff member who can speak the language of a diverse family, use them to interpret, settle, and be present during pick-up and drop-off times to enable better communication between the service and the family.

Example

Responding to language needs

Sven is an educator who wants to tell families about an upcoming fundraiser. He knows that some families welcome a handout and any email information that comes through, but there are also families who have little English. Sven is aware there are some families who have poor reading skills.

Eliab, a parent, has reasonably good English skills and is happy to translate and interpret information into Arabic if needed. Sven asks Eliab to help translate some simple information about the fundraiser into Arabic.



Sven knows that there are three families of Indonesian background who will not be able to understand the newsletter. Sven approaches the father of one of the families, who agrees that his oldest son, Bisma, can translate the information from English into Indonesian.

Sven knows there are some parents whose reading skills are poor, so he adds to his communication by setting up a simple video to play in the foyer. He records a staff member explaining the fundraiser and demonstrating what the plans are. Then he adds Eliab speaking in Arabic about the fundraiser. Finally, he asks Bisma to record the information in Indonesian.



Practice Task 3

1. Which of the following actions help convey clear verbal information? Select all that apply.

- Using active listening
- Being respectful, positive and focusing on the person
- Dismissing others' views
- Using clear body language
- Using empowering language
- Using sign language when a person speaks Italian

2. Draw a line to match each communication technique that helps to build rapport and respect to its description.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Informing families and giving enough information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Focusing on what the other person is saying, and using paraphrasing and summarising. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Being consistent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Responding promptly to questions and requests, and addressing issues positively. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Active listening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Supporting all families fairly and equally. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Having realistic expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Recognising that families whose first language is not English may not be gaining all the information they need. |

2B Collaborative relationships

Ongoing collaborative relationships enable families, as the child's first educators, to keep you up to date with their child's current needs, make shared decisions with you and share significant events.

Most of these key events have an impact on the child's abilities, behaviour and needs.

To help your collaboration be successful, implement skills that are common to all your relationships. For example:

- be non-judgmental
- be open to different perspectives
- apply empathy
- demonstrate active listening
- check understanding
- follow organisational standards, philosophies, policies and procedures.



Aim to establish a collaborative relationship with the child's family.

Contemporary family structures

To provide adequately for a family, you need to find out as much as you can about them.

Family members may include:

- mothers
- fathers
- grandparents
- siblings
- extended family members/relatives
- foster children
- partners of parents
- guardians and foster parents.

Family structure relates to the number of people in a family and who makes up the family. Contemporary family structures and the evolution of family means that there are a greater number of variables. Some you may recognise include:

- Nuclear families: A female and male (often married or living together, but not always) parent raising children.
- Same-sex parents raising children.
- Single-parent families: One parent raising children.
- Joint parenting: A separated family where the children spend time with both parents in different locations.
- Extended families: Two or more adults raising children in one home.
- Step or blended families: Two separate families merged into one.
- Grandparent families: Where a grandparent or grandparents are raising children.

Despite the structure of the family, they will each have their own child-rearing expectations and desires for their child. Children thrive in stable, caring, interactive environments that are focused on meeting their needs. Check that resources and discussions with children include a variety of family structures and value as many different families as possible.

Valuing family input

Respect family values and help them in achieving what they want for their child.

This helps you to support the home to care transition and achieve the goals families have for their child. Families will identify whether the ideals they have for their child are important to you by noticing:

- how you interact with them
- the questions you ask
- how confident you are in leading the relationship
- how you relate to their child and other children
- the policies and procedures of your service
- how you involve them in the service environment.

As most parents and family members look to you to lead the relationship, they may expect you to investigate what their values are. They will expect you to make a greater effort than just getting them to fill in an enrolment form. They need you to work with them and support them.

Families will feel involved by sharing their values and beliefs in a range of ways. They will also feel involved if they are confident that their wishes for their child are being respected and that you are considering their wishes throughout the day.

When they drop off or pick up their child, families see, hear and feel whether they are valued and whether their child is in a place that respects their family. Their emotions about leaving their child can be a major indication of whether your approach is family-centred.

Collecting information

There are many informal and formal ways you can collect family information.

An informal method may be a conversation at drop-off and pick-up times each day. Formal methods of communication usually come from arranged events or collections of details.

Formal methods to collect information

- Enrolment form: A standard form that collects the same information and is updated at least once a year.
- Enrolment interview: An orientation process in which families are shown around the service, introduced to the environment and asked about preferences.
- Referral agent: Information from other services may be given with the family's consent; this may be ongoing or a one-off.

- Meeting: Uninterrupted time in which information about children's interests, development, routines and preferences can be exchanged, discussed and negotiated; these may be scheduled throughout the year.
- Survey: Asking about particular information; this may be done regularly or just on certain occasions.
- Curriculum strategy: Requesting family knowledge of certain areas and information about their needs, goals or hopes for their child during curriculum planning times.

Communicating daily

Arrival and departure routines enable regular exchange of information and relationship building.

This is a time for welcoming the family and child, and taking time to exchange information about their needs. The information you exchange with families during these times helps you to understand the family and to find out how they fit into the community. It also allows families to actively participate with their child.

Talk to family members to find out more about a child's following changing needs:

- interests
- food and drink preferences and requirements (including any forbidden foods)
- sleeping and rest patterns
- health status
- preferred toys and activities
- preferred levels of social interaction/solitude
- ability levels
- additional support needs
- developmental stage
- cultural requirements.

Responsive, child-centred arrival times support the emotional and social development of the child by minimising stress, creating attachments and building relationships. The following is a guide to a responsive daily communication during an arrival time. The order might alter depending on the needs of those involved.

Welcome on arrival	Educators welcome families and children. They show their interest in the family and child.
Individual acknowledgement	Educators acknowledge families in an individual way. They might talk about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ individual needs, interests and plans ➤ items that have been brought into the environment ➤ events ➤ activities.
Proactive engagement	When educators interact in a welcoming way towards children, families feel more at ease. Contact that is initiated early on, while the family member is still present, ensures that separation is gradual and that both family member and child feel ready to part. This helps the whole family feel a sense of belonging.

<p>Exchange information</p>	<p>An exchange of information about the child ensures their needs are being met during the day, and that educators are aware of what has been happening at home. This might mean gathering routine information and details of emotional reactions. The older the child, the more the information exchange will focus on the child's interests and preferences. The child might also participate in the exchange of information.</p>
<p>Settle into an activity</p>	<p>Educators should settle children into activities and show their interest in the child. For babies and toddlers this might mean involving them in a routine or supporting them to play. Family members will expect that their child is given your attention and support; this helps them build trust.</p>
<p>Establish plans</p>	<p>Exchanging information establishes requirements for the day and lets family members know their child and their own needs are important. If a family member chooses to stay to settle the child or enjoy participation, this should be seen as a positive. Be aware that sometimes a family member may stay if they feel uncomfortable or anxious.</p>
<p>Establish a goodbye routine</p>	<p>Families may be in the process of establishing goodbye routines. Some families may already have a strategy, others may not be sure what to do, and at times a child may need a different approach or reaction.</p> <p>Culture may have an influence as some families may be physical with their children, giving hugs and kisses, while others may be more verbal, simply saying goodbye.</p> <p>Family members may seek educator guidance, and may do this by asking for help or looking toward them for support. Their anxiety or difficulty in leaving may be an indicator that they need support.</p> <p>Every family member must farewell their child. This helps the child to develop feelings of security, attachment and trust. When family members disappear unexpectedly, a child will feel anxious in the environment.</p>
<p>Reassure the child</p>	<p>If a child is stressed you may need to comfort them and help them farewell their family member. Always acknowledge the child's feelings and reassure them that their family member will return. When family members see educators supporting their child, they are likely to feel trust in them.</p>
<p>Reassure the family member</p>	<p>If a family member is stressed, you may need to offer suggestions for support, such as having a coffee in the staff lounge before leaving, having a chat or a cry, calling the service later to find out how their child is doing or using a support service if the situation is one that relates to family stress.</p> <p>Signs of stress include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ obvious emotions like crying or tearing up ➤ checking over and over that you understand what their child needs ➤ watching for a long time after they've said goodbye ➤ calling or contacting you frequently to check on the child.
<p>Farewell the family member</p>	<p>Educators should always farewell family members. This acknowledges them, shows you prioritise the relationship you have with them and lets them know they are important.</p>

Backgrounds and values

Encourage family members to tell you about aspects of their lives and culture, so you can integrate this into the child's day.

You may find that families are unsure what to tell you, so make use of information on your enrolment forms or update details. Add questions that are useful and ask for more information during your ongoing relationship. Encourage family members to share their beliefs, values and needs so you can use this information to structure a family-centred program based on sound education and care practices.

Incorporate a family's cultural background into the environment. Always check you are using language and cultural items correctly. Unless you are familiar with the family's language and cultural practices from your own experience, you may be creating offensive situations without realising.

To demonstrate that you respect the family, their culture and their values, you may wish to:

- display key words and label items in English, but include other languages in smaller print; young children learn new languages quickly
- play culturally relevant music (check with the family that this is child-appropriate if you do not understand the words)
- incorporate cultural items, including food, into the environment where appropriate, but check with the family that this is an accurate representation
- discuss traditions of other countries through literature, games and songs.

Questioning families

By providing opportunities for families to give feedback, you can find out what things are working well, whether the child is comfortable and happy or if there are problems.

Regular questioning, informal chats and observations help you to understand the child and their family, and allow family members to give you additional information that may impact the way you provide your service.

Types of information to ask families about

- Aspects of the curriculum and if they feel their child's day should be different
- How to exchange information and who to exchange it with
- Whether they are happy with the curriculum, the communication, their role or input into the service
- Their child's participation in planned activities
- Their own needs and wants
- Feedback and further ideas they can offer
- How they would like to be involved in children's experiences
- Their ability to come on excursions, help out for a short time, lead a group, teach the children a skill, or provide resources or information about experiences they think are valuable

Open-ended questions are far more effective than closed questions, as the following explains.

<p>Open-ended questions</p>	<p>Open-ended questions are a useful and important tool to incorporate into your everyday interactions. They can also be used to consult effectively. Open-ended questions require you to think about how your questions are worded and presented so that others have an opportunity to explain and extend beyond a simple 'yes' or 'no' response.</p> <p>Some examples of open-ended questions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What does your child prefer to eat? ➤ What happened following your appointment? ➤ What does your child like to play with? ➤ How should I go about settling your child to sleep?
<p>Closed questions</p>	<p>Questions that require a 'yes', 'no' or another one-word answer are called closed questions because the response is limited. Some examples of closed questions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does your child prefer sandwiches? ➤ Did the appointment go well? ➤ Does your child like trains?

Example
Supporting collaboration

Glenda seems quite hesitant and confused as Marly shows her through the service, but, the more Marly talks to Glenda and responds to her questions, the more Glenda seems to open up.

Glenda informs Marly that she has just been given custody of her grandchild and that she is overwhelmed with the requirements. She is also frightened by all the technology.

Marly actively listens to Glenda's story as she opens up more about what has occurred in the family. Marly listens intently and shows empathy for the situation. She sits with Glenda and writes out for her exactly what they need to do to get her grandchild started at the service. Marly shows Glenda how to access information and support on an iPad. Marly prints some areas of interest for Glenda to take home and explains that she will sit with Glenda to complete the online enrolment.



Exchanging ideas

By sharing what you know about a child, you include families in your curriculum and demonstrate your interest in their child.

In addition, if families view their child's records, they can pass on information that you may not be aware of, including cultural aspects and experiences outside the service.

Families may share concerns or ways they have dealt with issues themselves at home. This assists you to discuss shared strategies. This collaborative approach shows respect for families and their connection with the community.

Your approach should reflect your thoughts about the parenting role. In doing this, consider your beliefs about your own role. If you act like an expert at all times, you may miss the opportunity to be involved in a shared role with families. You may not notice that you are giving advice all the time and never asking for their opinions, ideas or information. This is likely to build a wall that may stop effective communication, and family members may feel that they are being belittled or that their role is not valued.

Decision-making

Collaborative relationships rely on shared decision-making.

In any decision-making process, you must consider who should be involved and what decisions each person could be involved in. Without consultation, families may feel isolated and that their needs are not being acknowledged.

This does not mean families must be involved in all decisions of the service, but it does mean that where their child is concerned, their wishes are represented as most important.

You may find that taking time to sit down with the family and talking without interruption is the best way to ensure you exchange information and make decisions in appropriate ways.

Other things that may assist decision-making are:

- using a positive tone of voice
- exchanging positive information, strengths and interests, as well as any issues
- demonstrating you have an attitude of success
- asking for suggestions, ideas and how the family feels about a situation
- providing some suggested strategies for discussion
- presenting an attitude of partnership rather than of being an expert
- using one-on-one meetings to exchange general information, rather than only meeting when there are problems
- always speaking about children positively when they are in hearing distance.

A logical process can help you with decision-making. The following five steps support positive decision-making processes. By working through the process systematically, you are less likely to overlook important factors.

Step	Process
1. Create a positive environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set up a situation that is comfortable. ➤ If the decision-making is confidential, choose a private space. ➤ If you are being interrupted, arrange a suitable time or space.

Step	Process
2. Investigate in detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask questions. ➤ Find out about how the other person feels, what is important to them and what their values and beliefs are. ➤ Discuss your feelings, what is important to you, and what your values are. Include the policies, procedures and philosophy of your service.
3. Explore alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set out the options. This might include brainstorming appropriate and inappropriate ideas. ➤ Discuss each of the options to clarify their intent and possibility.
4. Choose the best solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ From all alternatives, identify the solution that meets as many needs as possible. ➤ Check agreement.
5. Take action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Put the decision into practice.

Discussing children

Your level of involvement and the support you provide to families influences the level of trust and confidence parents have in your ability to understand, educate and care for their child.

Apart from a family's general involvement in daily activities, the following actions can be used to exchange information about a child's progress, relationships, interests and experiences.

Action	How to implement	Methods to use
Keep parents up to date by exchanging information and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Let them know what you are working on, what successes you experience and when you need more support. ➤ Develop communication methods so you both keep in touch. ➤ Share the records you have collected about the child and their relationships. ➤ Share information about community events. ➤ Share information about the child's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – progress – learning – interests – experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plans that are displayed ➤ Goals ➤ Diaries ➤ Portfolios ➤ Photographs ➤ Displays ➤ Interviews ➤ Daily discussions ➤ Apps ➤ Emails ➤ Social media
Respect family goals and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Show you understand the family and their community connections. ➤ Always take goals and objectives seriously and consider the priorities of the family. ➤ Support and encourage family members to carry through any strategies they choose, and acknowledge their contribution toward successes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussions ➤ Communication books ➤ Portfolios ➤ Emails ➤ Interviews ➤ Apps
Use the family's ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consult family members about how things might be done, and ask them to share their skills and knowledge with you. Remember that families know the child better than anyone else. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussions ➤ Surveys ➤ Emails ➤ Their attendance and involvement ➤ Interviews ➤ Meetings ➤ Apps ➤ Social media

Action	How to implement	Methods to use
Request the family's insight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask family members about any issues they have or foresee, past experiences, personal feelings and unsuccessful strategies. ➤ Gain greater background knowledge of the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Diaries ➤ Communication books ➤ Surveys ➤ Discussions ➤ Forms ➤ Interviews ➤ Apps ➤ Email
Provide information or support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide information about the child and the child's situation and progress so they are able to work toward future goals positively and successfully. ➤ Put families in touch with support services and advocacy networks. ➤ Family members are likely to be interested in any research or relevant parent education you come across. ➤ Provide parenting advice and education about relevant issues, such as toilet learning or biting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resources such as books, videos and brochures ➤ Photos ➤ Portfolios ➤ Routine displays ➤ Interviews ➤ Meetings ➤ Guest speakers ➤ Apps ➤ Email ➤ Social media

Positive discussion

Families may be aware that their child's behaviour is difficult or inappropriate at times.

They may even tell you about incidents that happen at home.

Never speak about negative incidents or issues while the child can hear your comments. Instead, ask the family member to speak to you privately. When you speak negatively about children in their presence, it can cause flow-on effects that may increase the negative behaviour and/or decrease the child's self-esteem.

Avoid becoming involved in discussions about what the child did wrong. Even if the family member discusses negative behaviour experiences with their child, always remain positive. For example, turn the conversation around to discuss the positives of the day and provide behaviour support ideas.

Example

Communicating about the child

Emma arranges to spend time talking about Despina with her mum, Angela, in order to develop care strategies. They look at the checklist Emma has been gathering about Despina's interests and skills.

When Angela looks through the developmental checklist, she identifies three skills that Despina is able to achieve competently at home that are not marked on the checklist.

Emma updates this information, then organises a time that they can catch up again and talk about Despina's interests, skills and development.



Key events

Families may or may not wish to share key events with you in detail.

The following table provides some examples of key events, and how these may positively or negatively affect the child.

Key event	Possible positive influence on the child	Possible negative influence on the child
Separation or divorce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relief, as a negative living situation may be resolved ➤ Change causing closer bonds between each family member and child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feeling confused or upset ➤ Feeling that they are to blame for the situation ➤ Feeling clingy or insecure ➤ Resentment
Change to family work situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Financial relief including increase in food, clothing and amenities ➤ Family situation more suited to needs of all members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Financial difficulty, including reduction in food, clothing or amenities ➤ One or both parents being unavailable or sometimes not seen by the child
Addition of a family member, such as a sibling or step-parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Excitement ➤ Easy transition into new role in the family ➤ Support and/or stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Confusion over change ➤ Difficulty accepting or being able to take on a new role in the family ➤ Jealousy or resentment ➤ Disappointment if the situation is not what was expected

Key event	Possible positive influence on the child	Possible negative influence on the child
Crisis and family problems (e.g. conflict, violence, drug addiction, gambling dependency or imprisonment of a family member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Underlying or undetectable issues may come to the surface to be rectified ➤ Care of the child may improve if the family receives assistance ➤ Relief if the crisis involves release from a dangerous or inappropriate situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fear and uncertainty ➤ Impact on play, relationship development and interaction ➤ Being placed in unsafe or uncertain situations ➤ Resentment
Loss and grief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learning about life and death ➤ Thinking about feelings and how they influence us ➤ Relief after a long or difficult illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inability to understand the situation ➤ Confusion ➤ Various or conflicting explanations being given
Recent move to Australia, interstate or into the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Safety and security ➤ Opportunity to settle in an environment after a trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Confusion and insecurity ➤ May add to a string of changes
Absence of a family member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Interest in communicating in different ways; for example, through drawings or letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of safety and security ➤ Confusion ➤ Resentment
Family and other celebrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Excitement ➤ Pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Anxiety ➤ Over-commitment

Sharing key events

Respect the amount of information a family provides about their lives; the level of detail will increase depending on the level of trust and respect you show.

Often the amount of information you receive relates to the positive or negative feelings that the family member links to the event, or their thoughts on how the information will be viewed socially. This may be influenced by a fear that they will be judged or that their child will be treated differently.

Consider how you would feel about sharing details of your own key events.

You may find the following websites help you understand families more clearly.

Resource	Website	Description
Be You - an initiative of Beyond Blue	aspirelr.link/be-you	Information on the role of families with a focus on mental health
Australian Foster Care Association (AFCA)	aspirelr.link/foster-care-australia	Information about foster care and links to state and territory associations

Resource	Website	Description
Raising children as grandparents and kinship carers	aspirelr.link/grandparents-and-kinship-carers	Resource for grandparents raising their grandchildren
Australian Institute of Family Studies	aspirelr.link/aifs	Information and factsheets on family trends in Australia

Practice Task 4

1. Which of the following are ways to encourage families to share information and show them that you value them as the child's first educator? Select all that apply.

- Asking open-ended questions
- Asking closed questions
- Engaging in shared decision-making
- Telling families what you think they should do to help their child
- Referring families to service policies and procedures
- Meeting with families so you have time to talk

2. Which of the following are open-ended questions? Select all that apply.

- Do you want me to provide the food at lunch time?
- When is the best time to provide the food?
- How do I know when she is tired?
- How do I administer the medication?
- Can you show me how to fit the sling?

3. Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order you would follow to support positive decision-making using a systematic approach.

- Choose the best solution.
- Create a positive environment.
- Explore alternatives.
- Investigate in detail.
- Take action.

4. Select true or false for the following statement.

When educators collect information about families through orientation and daily communication, this helps them to understand the child in a community context. * True * False

5. Which of the following statements are correct about family structures and backgrounds? Select all that apply.

- Asking families questions shows that you don't have an understanding of their values and needs, which might create negative feelings.
- Educators should communicate with and involve families and include aspects of their culture.
- Contemporary family structures and the evolution of family means that there are many different family structures.
- Families with the same family structure are likely to have the same expectations, desires and beliefs.
- To build a positive rapport with families, you should ask questions, share information, value input and involve families and their cultures in the environment and setting.

6. Draw a line to match each action about exchanging information to its description.

- | | |
|---|--|
| * Provide information or support | * To make decisions and gain further understanding, speak to families to exchange any issues, knowledge and ideas. |
| * Request insight and use the family's ideas | * Discuss and exchange information about a child's progress, learning, interests and experiences following service procedures. |
| * Exchange information and feedback to keep families up to date | * Assist families by providing advice, support services or networks and information about progress. |
| * Provide information or support | * Encourage and support families to follow through with strategies they have chosen. |

2C Questions, concerns and requests

Being in a partnership with a family means that decisions are shared.

There is a range of strategies you can implement to facilitate this and ensure all parties are satisfied with the outcome. Decisions may need to be made about an aspect of the curriculum or requests that are made. Parents are likely to become more involved in the service's operation if they are provided with the appropriate opportunities and methods that suit their abilities and communication styles.



Do your best to accommodate the requests of family members.

A family may ask questions, make a special request or demonstrate concern because they:

- are unsure
- want to understand or know more about something
- feel something is important to their family
- know of other families making the same request or feeling similar concerns
- have had a request provided for them in another service, or know someone who has
- have heard about a concern or had a situation occur in the past that is worrying them
- have specific child-rearing expectations
- lack skills or understanding of certain areas
- need additional support.

The following table shows questions and concerns that are common to families.

Things that assist their own child's daily care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The suitability of a menu ➤ The hours of the service ➤ A change that is being considered
Things that benefit the whole service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How they may participate ➤ The fundraising activities ➤ Surveys and suggestions ➤ Policy and procedure improvement ➤ Items or topics that are useful to share
Management decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Committee meeting times and days ➤ Items or topics that need to be discussed at committee meetings ➤ Policy or procedure alterations ➤ How to involve other families

If the information can be found in general service information, including policies, handbooks, noticeboards, online or in an app, show the family member where this can be found. Sharing these details helps them to learn to access information and feel empowered. This gives them the opportunity to understand the service, think about what their needs are and discuss these with you.

Family requests

At times, questions and concerns raised by families will lead to them making requests.

Your service management, philosophy, policies or procedures will influence your ability to cater for requests. Each must be considered carefully and responded to if possible. Where one service freely provides for a request, another will find this impossible.

The examples in the following table demonstrate requests that should be provided and requests that may be determined by the curriculum and philosophy of the service.

Requests that commonly are catered for	Requests that rely on the curriculum and service philosophy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Having a supply of alternative or additional food or drink to meet dietary needs ➤ Special requirements for routine times; for example, cuddles before sleep, no sleep, cloth or disposable nappies, content in a bottle or late snacks ➤ Relaying messages to people who work outside your organisation, such as a teacher or a specialist ➤ Transporting the child to kindergarten or a school. ➤ Implementation of specialist strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Taking the child to the doctor or dentist ➤ Providing bottles, dummies or nappies to kindergarten-age children ➤ Infants starting toilet learning

Negotiating to meet needs

When families present with requests that are challenging to meet, negotiation might be needed.

Successful negotiation relies on a variety of conditions. Both parties must:

- have a desire to solve the issue
- have knowledge of one another's situation
- be interested in achieving an outcome
- have adequate mutual recognition and respect
- have the ability to deliver on any commitment.

Have a discussion with the family member so you understand their requests or concerns and exactly what they feel or believe. Once you understand the person's perspective, negotiate to reach an agreement if the concern is difficult to resolve. Always communicate in a polite and respectful manner, as the person is making the request to meet the needs of their child, which is also your priority.

When considering questions about requests and concerns, you should do the following as part of your negotiation.

Be open	At first you may think the request or concern is strange or impossible, but by being open, you can look more broadly at the possibilities and keep your relationship with the family positive.
Identify options	<p>You may be able to do this by discussing the situation with the family member and/or brainstorming with your colleagues; either way, think of some possible options and ensure you involve everyone concerned.</p> <p>Keep your mind open. Try not to be bound by current limitations; these may be overcome.</p>
Consider the impact	<p>Assess how possible each of the options for resolution may be, remembering to consider the impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the environment (through waste, chemicals, consumables, etc.) ➤ the costs to the service (both immediate and ongoing costs) ➤ the staff (burnout, stress and negative feelings) ➤ social sustainability (how change will affect the service and how human rights will be met).
Weigh up alternatives or compromises	You may be able to do this by discussing the options with the family or by consulting with your colleagues. You must identify the modification that best meets the child's and family's needs, and is also safe and possible in the environment.
Encourage compromise	When the alternatives cannot exactly meet the request or resolve the concern, you may need to compromise to find what best meets the family's needs. Remain positive during this stage and work with, rather than against the family.
Communicate the final outcome clearly	<p>You, as well as families, children and other educators, need to be very clear about what is going to happen and when – you may document an outcome so that it remains clear.</p> <p>This should occur at the time of the negotiation, but you may need to follow up later by speaking to the family, phoning the family, or writing a letter or email to explain the situation.</p> <p>When outcomes are written, there is less likelihood of misunderstanding. Written communication is a backup if any party suggests the outcome agreed upon is different to the action that was carried out.</p>
Review regularly	Check with the family that the final outcome is working for them. If the family is not pleased by the outcome, you may need to rethink alternatives and come to a more appropriate agreement.

In successful decision-making and negotiation, both parties should feel positive about the outcome of the discussion. A win-win situation relies on both parties thinking about the needs of others, yet still standing up for their own wants and needs.

Reaching an agreement

A family's request for something that you or the service considers unusual or inappropriate is not an indication of their parenting ability or a reason for you to be critical of their decisions.

These requests simply indicate diversity. Requests may be opportunities for you to reconsider service philosophies, policies and procedures.

Be sensitive to the family's point of view. Try to see things from their perspective and solve the situation, not just by identifying what your role is, but by considering why or what the family really wants or needs. Although you may encounter a small number of families who can be difficult, critical, demanding, irresponsible or uncooperative, most families have a justifiable reason for asking for your cooperation, so consider these requests and concerns openly and flexibly.

When you have developed open and clear collaborative relationships with families, you can use their feedback as a guide to indicate which requests and concerns are important or need to be offered more widely, and how this may be done. A request or concern that is important to most families should be addressed throughout the service as a priority.

Example

Considering and negotiating a request

Jelena, a parent at the service, approaches an educator, Portia, and asks if they can include some aspects of Muslim religion in her daughter's curriculum. Portia explains that children from a range of religions attend the service and that it really is a family responsibility to include religion in a child's life. Jelena and Portia talk about the sorts of things Jelena would like included and together they come to a win-win solution.

Muslim events will be included, along with the celebrations of other religions that already take place. However, Portia will not include discussion of the religious aspects behind any of these events. Instead, they will focus on the family and community meanings behind the events.



Final decisions

So that negotiated solutions are understood by everyone involved, communicate the final decision clearly and in detail.

There are a number of ways to do this:

- Finish a discussion or negotiation by outlining the result.
- Write down what has been agreed on.
- Involve others affected by the situation.

Ensure that all people involved are clear about what has been decided on and what their roles will be.

There are benefits to this continued checking. They include:

- The results of the decision-making are constantly clarified.
- The decision makers are able to express their continued understanding and commitment to the results.
- All parties are able to demonstrate their preparedness to continue discussions and identify additional issues or needs as necessary.
- No one is confused or unclear about what will happen.

Example

Communicating a final decision

Jelena and Portia were able to negotiate a solution to Jelena's request to include some aspects of Muslim religion into the curriculum. At the end of this discussion, the final decision is clarified in the following ways:

- Portia thanks Jelena for her input into the curriculum and summarises the discussion by saying that they will incorporate Muslim celebrations into the curriculum, focusing on their link with the family and the community rather than religion. She asks Jelena if she can write down the celebrations she feels will be important to the children and how they might include these.
- Portia and Jelena agree to meet prior to the next celebration to ensure that the event is celebrated respectfully, and in line with the service's standards and procedures.
- Portia writes a note to Jelena saying that she is pleased that they have come to an agreement.

Jelena provides a flyer outlining the Muslim celebrations for the year and how families can find out more.



Inability to meet requests

There may be times when a request cannot be accommodated.

These reasons usually relate to the limitations of your service; for example:

- educator-child ratios
- health and safety concerns
- funding
- the physical environment and layout
- resources that are available or accessible
- the time available
- peak or slow times of the day
- the number of children in the service.

Safety is a major limitation when trying to accommodate requests. You have a duty of care to the children, which means you are obligated to provide them with a safe and secure environment and appropriate care.

Whenever you are faced with a limitation, ensure that you:

- remain positive
- communicate the limitation in a way that demonstrates you are taking the request seriously
- provide some suitable alternatives.

As families are not generally aware of all curriculum aspects, any limitations need to come with an explanation that makes sense to them. Explain the issue clearly, and leave time for discussion, so that the limitation is understood and the outcome is supported. This is especially important when the limitations being explained relate to a child's needs or development, as this type of situation can create a great deal of concern for families and may also link to breaches of organisational standards, policies and procedures and/or legal requirements such as disability legislation.

If negotiation or discussions become negative, ensure that you:

- do not take things personally
- maintain your composure and keep your voice at the same level
- avoid statements that directly disagree with the other person's point of view
- acknowledge that you have heard the message
- agree with parts of the message you accept
- seek clarification or modification of the parts of the message you do not accept.

Whatever the outcome, you should write down any final decision and clearly communicate it to all involved.

Example

Inability to meet a request

A parent asks you to call them every half hour so they know their child is settled. Limitations that may apply to this request include the following:

- Educator-child ratios: You would be leaving the child and distracted from interaction and supervision during this time.
- Funding: You might not have funds available to provide additional staff to cover you while you do this.
- The physical environment and layout: You may not be able to access a phone without leaving the children.
- Time available: You will be limiting the time you have with children.
- Peak times of the day: You will be busy and less focused during these times.
- The number of children in the service: You may not be able to do this for all children, or you may be alone with the children and unable to make a call.

You negotiate with the parent and agree you will call after meal and snack times and after sleep times. You give the option of regular communication through the service app.





Practice Task 5

1. Which of the following statements are correct about addressing a family's requests? Select all that apply.

- All concerns and requests should be responded to, considered and negotiated in a manner that is prompt, respectful and involves the family in the process.
- If a family's request cannot be accommodated due to duty of care obligations and safety concerns, you should ignore the request and inform the family it cannot be accommodated.
- The service's philosophy, policies and procedures influence your ability to cater for requests.
- Having an open and collaborative relationship and discussions with families will help to develop and negotiate strategies and facilitate a shared decision-making process.
- In successful negotiation, one party always comes out better off than the other party.

2. Draw a line to match the beginning of each sentence about negotiating to meet needs to the correct ending.

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * When a final decision has been reached | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * both parties to be interested in achieving a positive outcome and to have a desire to solve the problem. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Successful negotiation requires | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * educators must be open and identify options by weighing up alternatives or compromises. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * When faced with an inability to meet requests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * it needs to be communicated clearly and a record kept on what has been agreed upon. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * When negotiating a resolution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * remain positive and communicate in a way that demonstrates you are taking it seriously. |

2D Involving families and community

Involving families in the service can be challenging, as each family has their own commitments and level of comfort.

The varying skills, abilities, time available, ideas and interests of individual families influence their involvement, as do their ideas about what education and care is and how it should function. A family's ability to participate varies according to their situation; for example, many family members work and may not have the opportunity to participate.

Many services believe family involvement is about attendance at prearranged events, such as a family picnic or information evening. Some services consider family involvement to be families doing something for the service, such as fundraising or being on a committee. While these opportunities are valuable, family involvement can be as simple as a family member staying a little longer at drop-off or pick-up times, and enjoying an activity with their child or a small group.

The most important aspect of family involvement is the relationship you develop. This relationship helps you to encourage active family involvement as you will know more about them and can focus on their individual interests and abilities. This helps develop a rapport between the service and the family.

Levels of involvement

Assess each family, and identify their needs and ability to become involved.

You can view family participation as a four-level system, described in the following table.

Level 1	<p>Some families are positive about your service, but are unable to or choose not to be directly involved. These families may include people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ would have a conflict of interest if they were involved; for example, they have interests in other areas of education and care services, and cannot be biased towards a particular service ➤ have commitments that prevent them from participating ➤ are experiencing stressful events ➤ are unclear about their ability to participate ➤ have beliefs around sharing information or being involved in a service ➤ are not interested in becoming further involved. <p>These reasons should not be used to exclude a family or assume that a family is unable to participate. These families will benefit from support networks. Support networks involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ allowing time and space for communication ➤ hosting meetings ➤ providing information or referrals to facilitate contact with a network.
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Level 2	<p>At this level, families are mostly involved in service situations that are important to their own child. They may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ read the noticeboard or newsletter ➤ provide information about their child ➤ respond to surveys and other feedback opportunities when this relates to their own family ➤ contribute to general activities, such as bringing in recycled materials or selling raffle tickets ➤ exchange comments through emails, social media or apps.
Level 3	<p>At this level, families offer or agree to do tasks that benefit the whole service, not just their own child. They may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ fix broken toys or equipment ➤ be a support person during an excursion and take responsibility for some tasks ➤ help organise fundraising and activities ➤ complete surveys and evaluations ➤ respond to and review strategies ➤ be involved in newsletters or noticeboard presentations ➤ initiate social media or app discussions.
Level 4	<p>At this level, families take on management roles and are able to contribute to the running of the service. They may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ join a committee ➤ offer to share knowledge or skills with the children ➤ work in the service as a volunteer or casual worker ➤ attend meetings and help to develop policies for the service.

Some families may not participate in specific activities or fundraisers due to their beliefs. For example:

- Food related fundraisers may include foods that are inappropriate to their child's nutritional needs or dietary requirements. It may go against their nutritional beliefs or the food policies of the service.
- Selling raffle tickets may be seen as a form of gambling.
- Some religions prohibit participation in activities that involve alcohol, including events, prizes or gifts involving alcohol. Some people are challenged by alcohol dependence or have been in the past, and some may feel uncomfortable at events where alcohol is being consumed.

You may not be able to cater for all possible beliefs and expectations, but you must respect these.

Increasing involvement

Identify the level of involvement families currently have, then offer them options for involvement at the next level.

Some strategies that may encourage family members to become more involved include volunteer opportunities.

You may:

- encourage families and other community members to volunteer their support by attending events
- ask family members if they would like to participate as volunteers and respond to these indications by arranging appropriate opportunities
- encourage family and community members to become involved as:
 - participants in management meetings
 - presenters of activities
 - assistants with art shows, read-aloud events, workshops, book swaps and other activities
 - volunteers on excursions
 - instructional assistants in specific activities
 - non-instructional assistants in general activities
 - from-home contributors; for example, assembling materials at home.

Community involvement

The curriculum should be rich and varied, showing how children are interacting with culturally diverse materials and messages.

The National Quality Standard (NQS) encourages us to think about these curriculum involvements within the following elements.

- Element 1.1.1: Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators
- Element 1.1.2: Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program
- Element 6.2.3: The service builds relationships and engages with its community

Through these Elements, services build children's:

- Identity: through involvement with family, the service and the child's familiar community
- Sense of belonging: increased when their family and community are represented
- Understanding of others: children learn through being involved in and being welcomed into the communities of others.

For many families, their child's involvement with communities outside their own will be new. For some children and their families, the service will be their first experience of community outside their own home.

To bolster this there should be evidence in the service that:

- learning resources represent a wide range of people, customs and cultures
- the menu is diverse
- routines cater for individual needs
- families and communities are connected
- experiences focus on:
 - language and bilingualism
 - gender differences and similarities
 - family lifestyles
 - festivals and celebrations.

Community events

Community events provide children and their families with opportunities to see how they can make a difference to others and how the community values their contribution.

The type and size of events vary greatly, so consider their relevance to individual children and families.

Community events may be based on state or national activities, or be focused on local community interests. Your local council website should have information on upcoming community events.

They may include occasions for:

- specific groups (e.g. a senior's day or toddler library session)
- whole communities (e.g. the Royal Melbourne Show)
- education (e.g. a Vietnamese cultural day)
- charity (e.g. a fundraising event to raise money to build a playground in a park).

Local communities

The local community is full of people and places that can be safely and appropriately explored.

Some of this exploration can occur daily in the service. Children and their families can be involved with those that form part of the service day to day operations. People such as delivery drivers, postal workers and cleaners may not take responsibilities working with children, but are part of the service community and might give the children a wave, be known by name, or might explain what they do when they are in the service.

Links to the local community might be through excursions, incursions (where people come to your service) or affiliations (where you participate with parts of the community from the service) are also possible options.

Ways to explore the local community

- walks and using maps and photographs of familiar places for discussion and activities
- Asking families and staff about their community interests and including this information
- Inviting community members to visit and share something about themselves and their role, such as a police officer, grocery store manager or artist
- Providing props that link with community interests and activities, such as grocery items and puppets
- Visiting libraries, museums, markets and parks, and looking at statues, gardens, buildings and signs
- Participating in festivals and recreation activities such as swimming lessons and music tuition
- Being involved in community initiatives, such as sponsoring a child, raising money and donating goods
- Including child-focused events such as children's week picnics, library story time and children's art shows
- Organising weekly, fortnightly or monthly visits to a community service such as an aged care or disability service
- Writing letters or sending pictures
- Participating in environmental care projects

Community protocols

Protocols are practices and principles of a culture, ethnic, gender or other group. Each group has a different purpose and its own protocols.

When you liaise with, visit or invite people from community groups, ask about and identify their cultural expectations and be informed of their practices. Be confident in asking about participation protocols and support children to learn about and understand these. Most groups are pleased to welcome children and teach them about their practices.

Some protocols include:

- a clothing expectation, such as taking your shoes off when inside.
- certain information is only available to men or to women.
- you must seek special permission to do some things.
- you must follow a process or pattern of participation.
- you are expected to be quiet at times and free to talk at other times.
- males only or females only participation may be required.

Learn-at-home activities

Participation can be increased by encouraging families to take part in learn-at-home activities.

These activities are designed to enable the family to gain a better understanding of how learning occurs, how it benefits the child, what is involved and how the service operates. You can do this by:

- offering learning activities and events for the whole family
- inviting families to borrow resources from service libraries
- linking families with resources and activities that promote learning in the community
- giving families materials they can use to evaluate their child's progress and provide feedback to educators
- linking home learning activities to learning in the service
- promoting learning through newsletters, displays, social media or apps.

Example

Encouraging family involvement

Patricia is organising an open day. She decides to send an email to each family and puts a post on the social media page inviting all families to come along on the day

Currently there are not many families who are actively involved in the service, so she asks them if they are available to help with aspects of the day, such as volunteering to help out at activities, creating pamphlets or putting together packs to hand out. This allows for a variety of options and ways that families can become involved, either at the service or at home.





Practice Task 6

1. Families may be involved in advisory, consultative and decision-making roles, and this helps to develop rapport. Draw a line to match each example to the level of parent involvement.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| * Helping with newsletter development and completing surveys. | * Level 1 |
| * Attending meetings and participating in children's activities. | * Level 2 |
| * No involvement due to inability or unwillingness to do so, but may benefit from support network facilitation. | * Level 3 |
| * Bringing in boxes for the craft station, and reading and responding to posts on social media. | * Level 4 |

2. Draw a line to match each term about family involvement to its example.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| * Strategies to increase involvement | * Providing resources or activities for families to use at home with their children. |
| * Opportunities for involvement | * Reviewing a family's current involvement in the service and offering involvement at the next level. |
| * Learn-at-home activities | * May include staying longer at drop off, participating in children's experiences, providing feedback, exchanging information and resources, being involved in committees, policies and decision-making. |

3. Which of the following are correct about children's connection with the community? Select all that apply.
- Element 6.2.3 states 'The service builds relationships and engages with its community'.
 - Community events may be based on state or national activities, or be focused on local community interests.
 - Links to the local community might be through excursions, incursions (where people come to your service) or affiliations (where you participate with parts of the community from the service).
 - Families and staff can share their community interests and include this information as part of the curriculum.
 - It is important for children to learn about community protocols; however, it wouldn't be expected that children follow these.

Summary

- The information you exchange with parents about a child's progress, relationships, interests and experiences helps you to build a comprehensive picture of the child and their family, and develop appropriate education and care strategies.
- Exchanged communication allows you to understand the family and their community.
- Being in a partnership with a family means that all decisions are shared.
- When there is a decision to be made, your focus should be on how to involve the family, or how to make a decision they would agree with.
- Your service should have a range of strategies you can implement to ensure all parties are satisfied with the outcome of a decision.
- Demonstrate that you understand family beliefs and values by being aware of different cultural considerations.
- It is crucial that you respond to a family's questions, concerns and requests promptly, accurately and courteously.
- Family members have skills, knowledge and expertise that you may not already have in your service.

Learning Checkpoint 2

Partnerships with families

Part A

1. A parent has asked if her eight-month-old son can sleep with his large teddy bear. Number each step from 1 to 7 in the order you would follow to negotiate and make a decision about this request.

Work out a solution that meets as many needs as possible. Discuss the final decision and clarify you both understand this.

Discuss each option with the parent and identify which is appropriate.

Meet with the parent to discuss her needs.

Explain to the parent that you will find a comfortable, private place to speak with her where you won't be interrupted.

Inform all educators working with the child of any changes to his sleep plan and put this into action.

Explain how you feel about the request and provide your beliefs, as well as showing the parent the sleeping policies and safe sleeping guidelines.

Gather feedback to check the plan is working and meeting as many needs as possible.

2. Draw a line to match the method of exchanging information to the most appropriate scenario.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| * Survey | * A child has had a great day and has spent a long time playing with other children. |
| * Informal discussion | * A child has been observed by educators and they feel he may have a speech delay. |
| * Portfolio | * Learning stories have been developed about a child. |
| * Display | * A child who normally refuses to eat ate all his lunch today. |
| * Communication book | * A group of children have been looking at sunflowers in the garden and have been painting their interpretation. |
| * Formal meeting | * Educators would like to know how families feel about their level of communication so they can make improvements. |

3. Select true or false for the following statement.

Contemporary family structures include families that live in various locations, families that are new, families that are unhappy, families who need interpreters, families that are unusual to most people and families that work in the community.

* True * False

Part B

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Families have asked if the service could provide dinner meals. Selina has discussed this with families and educators at a meeting and promptly following this, has organised a trial evening meal menu for one month. Selina questioned families to gather information about the variety of cultures, religion and allergies to cater for the range of dietary requirements so the menu would represent the diversity of families. She has asked families if they have knowledge, skill, expertise or experience in developing menus.

Selina has developed a paper and digital form for families to provide feedback.

1. Which of the following statements are correct about Selina's communication with families? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Selina and educators have had discussions that are relevant to family needs. They have actively listened and responded to families' requests. | * Yes | * No |
| b. By catering for a variety of cultures and dietary requirements, Selina has incorporated family beliefs, as well as their knowledge, skills and expertise. | * Yes | * No |
| c. By providing feedback options, Selina allows for further communication and allows families to communicate at a time and level that suits them. | * Yes | * No |
| d. Selina should share all specific information about families allergies, culture and community connections with other families who raise questions. She should tell them that this links with NQS Element 1.2.1 | * Yes | * No |
| e. As Selina is approachable, families feel they can openly exchange information with her. | * Yes | * No |

2. Which of the following should Selena do to communicate the new information about the evening meals with families? Select all that apply.
- Provide the new information in a variety of common languages used at the service so all families feel included.
 - Make sure sufficient information is provided, such as meal size, price, ordering and ingredients so that families are fully informed.
 - Use a variety of methods for exchanging the information, such as a poster next to the menu, an email and a display of the containers showing the size of the meals and how the food will be provided.
 - Share information about community support items that have been involved in developing the menu and talk about them with children.



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

- 3A** Informing families of incidents
- 3B** Assisting families to access resources

Informing families about incidents and resources

Incidents may occur that need to be discussed with families.

The way you handle these discussions reflects on your professionalism, the value you place on the children's wellbeing and your relationship with families.

At times you will need to provide information to families about services and resources in the wider community. If you are aware of the various support networks and the type of information they can provide, you will be able meet the family's needs.

3A Informing families of incidents

When a child is involved in an incident, it is likely that their family will react in some way.

Each family will respond differently to incidents. Some families may be devastated or traumatised by an event, while others may feel comfortably supported and cope well in the same situation. Never assume you know how the family will react.

The following table provides reactions you may experience from family members.



Families will react differently to the same incident.

Positive feelings	Thanking you for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ supporting their child ➤ dealing with the incident capably ➤ contacting them immediately ➤ being calm and in control.
Negative feelings	Being defensive or accusing about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ how you handled the situation ➤ how their child was cared for ➤ whether your reactions met their expectations ➤ whether policies or procedures were adequate.

Sometimes shock and concern cause people to react in a way that is different from their usual behaviour. Consider how you disclose information about an incident to ensure the family is supported and that their reactions are respected.

You need to be prepared to use different management strategies to support everyone involved. Remember that each family's reaction and the extent of the impact may change over time. Follow-up action after an incident is important.

Taking time

Taking time with the family and talking without interruption is the best way to ensure you and the family members exchange information in appropriate ways.

Each family requires a different amount of time before they are able to discuss an incident in detail and share their thoughts. Mostly this occurs once their child has recovered from any effect of the incident, but some families will not feel comfortable until steps have been taken to rectify a service concern relating to the incident. Other families might commit to a response early.

The following table provides some other strategies that may assist you.

<p>Use a calm tone of voice</p>	<p>If you sound agitated, you may give the family member a feeling that they should also panic.</p> <p>If you cannot control your panic, you are probably not in a state where you should be taking responsibility. Someone else may be available to inform the family, and you can follow up when you are better able to.</p>
<p>Give the family member time to listen and react to the situation</p>	<p>The family member may express anger, fear, uncertainty or feelings of being overwhelmed. It is better they do so with you than for them to go home and express this in a situation where they have no support and no additional information.</p> <p>This is a good time to use your active listening skills.</p>
<p>Show empathy for the family</p>	<p>Empathy means trying to identify with and understand the other person's situation.</p> <p>Try to avoid saying things such as, 'I know how you feel', as you do not know how they feel unless you have experienced the same situation yourself.</p>

Resolution strategies

Families can be actively involved in developing resolution strategies, or they can state which strategy they feel happiest with.

Involving families at this level is not just about 'doing the right thing'; family members who are involved in developing a solution will see that you consider their child's and their own interests a priority, and that you wish to resolve situations in ways that are responsive to all needs. These feelings assist to create security and respect.

Remember to consider:

- whether your communication requires an interpreter
- privacy and/or confidentiality
- decreasing your formality
- timing
- who you should share information with
- how messages can be relayed.

You may involve family members through:

- an individual meeting to review the situation and exchange information and ideas for improvement
- an open meeting where interested family members can express their ideas
- a survey providing sections for suggestions and comments
- asking families directly which solution they feel is most appropriate
- asking families if the solution you decide on suits their needs.

The strategies that you choose to implement should be influenced greatly by what the families feel are appropriate.

After an incident

The impact of any incident may result in a loss of confidence in you or the service.

This is an essential area to address. To do so, and to ensure your relationship with a family is ongoing and successful, you must continue to communicate after an incident. You should:

- listen actively
- give enough information
- ensure your information or message is consistent
- have realistic expectations.

Regardless of the time it takes for family members to be prepared to discuss an incident, you should be working to identify ways to avoid the incident from happening again. This may be a simple procedure change, or there may be an ongoing or major change required.

Family members are excellent resources when working on these improvements. The added benefit to drawing on their skills and knowledge is that they will see you are considering their child's needs and presenting an attitude of partnership rather than authority.

Family members may be able to assist with the following:

- The possible impact of an incident: Family input widens your personal and professional view of the situation.
- Suggested responses: Find out what families want to know about and when, and how they want to be informed.
- New ideas for resolving issues: Family members may come up with very useful ideas for avoiding incidents; for example, they may have dealt with a similar situation in a different industry or environment.
- Previous experience: Family members may have solved this situation at home or they may have strong ideas about what they feel is acceptable or unacceptable for their child.

When a resolution has been determined, the details of any change need to be communicated to everyone who may be affected.

Example

Different reactions to the same incident

Helga, an educator, is in charge when an incident involving three children occurs. When she relates the situation to the three families, they respond in the following ways:



- Parent 1 starts yelling, saying, 'You are meant to be looking after my child!' He wants to know who the other children are and how to contact their parents. He says he will report the service for negligence.
- Parent 2 becomes distraught and needs some time to talk through her feelings. She asks for a counselling service and feels that she can't have her child in an education and care setting until she knows everyone is safe.
- Parent 3 thanks Helga for how she has dealt with the situation and asks what will be done to stop it from happening again.

The next day, Helga observes the families and discusses the situation with each parent. She uses a simple question to open up discussion between the parents and herself about the incident and its impact, asking, 'Is there anything you need from us today?'

- Parent 1 apologises for his reaction and says he was just shocked at the time. He says that he has not reported the service, but wants to be reassured that a policy change will occur.
- Parent 2 brings her child into the service and stays for a while before leaving. She has taken her child to see their family doctor, who said the child is fine.
- Parent 3 does not come into the service today. Helga gives her a call to check if everything is okay, but she says she feels more upset than she did initially. She says that she really needs to have a one-on-one meeting and be clear about what happened.

Practice Task 7

1. Draw a line to match each term about incident reporting to its explanation.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Post-incident response and follow up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Information should be conveyed in a calm way that demonstrates empathy for the family. Provide the opportunity to talk while staying calm, listening and showing empathy. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Resolution strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Should involve educators and families both making decisions about a strategy that they feel comfortable with. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Taking time to communicate and inform of an incident | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * There may be a loss of trust and breakdown in the relationship, so allowing families to be involved in the service decisions will help with this. |

2. Which of the following are ways families can be involved in decision-making, advisory and consultative roles following an incident? Select all that apply.
- Exchanging information and ideas for improvement
 - Responding to a survey based on ideas for improvement
 - Asking families directly which solution they feel is most appropriate
 - Telling families that the solution you decide best suits their needs

3B Assisting families to access resources

At times you may be required to provide information to families about services and resources.

This may follow an incident or challenge occurring in the service, or an incident or challenge experienced by the family outside of the service.

By being aware of the various support networks and the types of information available, you will be able to do your best to meet the needs of families.

Your role may include identifying appropriate services, providing information, making contact and/or supporting families during a process or referral.



You may be required to contact support services on behalf of a family.

Types of resources

Families may need resources such as information or access to services.

These resources may relate to support for a variety of issues, such as:

- parenting issues
- advocacy services
- family planning
- financial assistance
- housing support
- medical services
- specialist care
- education and care outside of your service.

Some government services and resources that are available are outlined in the following table.

Parent education and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Family education workshops on topics suggested (such as toilet learning and family planning), and held at times and places that are easily accessible to all ➤ Resources such as books and websites ➤ Toy resources ➤ Support groups for families with specific interests and needs ➤ Access to specialists such as speech therapists, behaviour support, paediatricians and support workers
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meetings ➤ Specialists to help address concerns or complaints ➤ Family groups ➤ Family partnerships ➤ Reference groups

Government services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Online access to Centrelink, Medicare, etc. ➤ Child health information ➤ Child Care Subsidy information
Community outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Information and referral ➤ Strategies to reach out to adults, families and children of all ages and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds in the community ➤ Local civic and service groups involved in mentoring, volunteering and helping with fundraising events
Specific services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Financial assistance ➤ Medical support ➤ Housing support

Providing resources

To assist families to identify, locate and access the resources they need, you should first establish what they require.

Ask questions and make suggestions to ensure you have sufficient information to help you choose the correct resources. When you have an accurate idea of what is needed, you can put into place some actions to find the best resource.

Ways to find the most suitable resources

- Look back on resources you have used successfully in the past.
- Check on resources you already have details of.
- Use websites for research; for example, try sites that link you to resources or support such as:
 - aspirelr.link/parent-easy-guides
 - aspirelr.link/child-and-family-relationship-services
- Use websites that provide relevant and current information (government sites are most reliable); for example:
 - Children of Parents with a Mental Illness: aspirelr.link/copmi
 - Raising Children Network, the Australian parenting website: aspirelr.link/raising-children-network
- Ask others within or external to your service for resources that may be relevant and useful.
- Seek government sources of information such as:
 - Centrelink, Medicare, Child Support, NDIS and Australian Taxation Office information at my.gov.au
 - careers information at myfuture.edu.au
 - family relationship support at Family Relationships Centres familyrelationships.gov.au
 - state and territory specific services at raisingchildren.net.au/grown-ups/services-support/services-families/government.

Often there will be a number of families looking for the same resources, so it may be appropriate to provide information to the whole group at once; for example, during a family group education session.

Communicating information

Typical ways to communicate information include social media, apps, websites, noticeboards, newsletters, brochures and resource folders.

Technology, including service apps, is increasingly used for sending emails, advertising programs and special occasions, and developing databases of information.

Many services provide a library with books, DVDs, pamphlets, posters and brochures on a range of relevant subjects. These types of libraries may be the first step for some families in finding out how the community can support them, as many find it difficult at first to share their hardships, confusions or personal issues with an educator.

When you locate a support service for a family, it may be suitable to make the first contact if the family agrees. This way you can check if this is the correct service and gain all details that the family may require.

People from non-English-speaking backgrounds should be provided with information in their home language as much as possible. For example, a family handbook can be translated into a home language so the family understands. Educators should support families to see and use a range of languages.

Keeping information up to date

The resources you provide for families are only useful if they are maintained, so continually review and update the content.

All materials must represent appropriate practice and service beliefs. Any contacts should be current.

An effective process for maintaining current details is to develop an index or database that allows you to list and store details about resources. This might include a check system allowing you to identify when you have checked currency and whether there are expiries or notes relevant to a resource or service.

Steps to ensure the information is current and relevant

- Regularly add new items (such as books, brochures, links and DVDs) and let families know they are available.
- Focus your additions on current issues.
- Vary resources to include a range of family issues, interests and needs.
- Ensure brochures or other resources on display are kept neat and tidy, are easy to find and are regularly topped up with current copies.
- Check for issue dates and that the materials are current; throw away or recycle out-of-date materials.
- Use resources that are less than 10 years old unless you feel they are particularly valuable.
- Create a system that includes rules for borrowing and caring for each resource.
- Check names, contact details and access requirements for services.

To continually access new information, use the following actions:

- Have informal or formal arrangements with government or non-government departments. Most government agencies or legislative bodies automatically send out information about changes. They may also have updating services you can subscribe to.
- Maintain contact with networks to update information or access materials for families. Networks can support you if you need to understand a new requirement or if you need advice based on experience. To gain a wide range of information, participate in different groups with a wide focus across the education and care sectors.
- Arrange subscriptions to publications such as journals, newsletters and emails.
- Collect materials provided by and about other organisations and services, such as brochures, posters and fliers.
- Regularly check newspapers and radio for appropriate stories or announcements.
- Use online networking to participate in forums, discussion boards and online professional development training.

Example

Maintaining resources

Caitlin develops a resource library that she sets up at the entry of the service. It mainly contains brochures about services in the community, but she also adds new information regularly. She includes one or two posters and signs she feels are relevant to families.

To keep everything up to date, Caitlin does the following:

- As a routine task, she neatens the resources whenever she walks past. She feels families will find it more useful if they can easily find what they need.
- Every six months, she checks that the services, contact details and offerings are still current.
- She changes the posters at the start of each month, saving any new ones until then, or requesting new posters from services that she thinks are appropriate for families.
- If she hears any issues being discussed, she approaches relevant services and gains any information they can provide.
- She redevelops the sign at the end of each month showing what is happening in the community during the coming month. She accesses this information from the local government calendar.





Practice Task 8

1. Which of the following statements are correct about communicating information to families? Select yes or no for each one.
 - a. Information about a variety of resources and community services should be available to families in appropriate languages. * Yes * No
 - b. A brochure rack in the foyer is the type of resource all families need. * Yes * No
 - c. To help families access the service and resources they need, you need to ask questions. * Yes * No
 - d. Once you have a set of resources, you don't need to add any new information. Too much information creates confusion and looks messy. * Yes * No
 - e. Services need systems in place to check that information provided is current and accurate. * Yes * No

Summary

- When incidents occur, you must inform parents promptly using respectful and responsive communication.
- Part of your role as an educator is to share community information with families so they know what support is available and how to access it.
- Resources that parents may need includes:
 - community outreach services
 - parenting advice or education
 - advocacy services
 - family planning
 - financial assistance.
- Typical methods of communicating information include using a noticeboard, newsletters, brochures, resource folders, emails and the service's website.
- Use a range of strategies to ensure the information on services and resources remains current, such as checking dates of publications, throwing away out-of-date information, and ensuring that materials represent appropriate practice and service beliefs.
- Use a range of strategies to continually access new resources and information, such as subscribing to community services information, attending meetings and developing networks.
- Families may need assistance to make contact with those who are providing resources and services.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Informing families about incidents and resources

Part A

Read the first case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study 1

Kat (aged five) fell over and cut her face on a post near the cubby house. Renee, the team leader, asked another educator to comfort Kat and follow first-aid procedures.

Renee called Kat's mum straight away in a panic, explaining that Kat may have concussion and may need stitches on her face. She said Kat must be picked up immediately and taken to the hospital.

Kat's mum didn't say much on the phone or when she came to pick Kat up. Kat's dad rang later wanting to know what happened and to tell Renee that the cut was small and did not need stitches. Renee organised a time to call him back so she could talk to him without interruption.

1. Which of the following statements are correct about how Renee informed Kat's mum about the incident? Select yes or no for each one.
 - a. Renee was the right staff member to make the call to report the incident. * Yes * No
 - b. Renee should make time to listen to Kat's dad's concerns and allow him to express his feelings. * Yes * No
 - c. Renee knows Kat's mum is understanding of the incident as she has not voiced any concerns. * Yes * No
 - d. Renee needs to show empathy for the family when speaking to them. * Yes * No
 - e. Renee should have been able to pre-empt how the family were going to react based on her relationship with them. * Yes * No

2. Which of the following should Renee have done after the incident? Select all that apply.
- Involve families in developing a strategy for removing the hazard.
 - Look at ways of avoiding the incident occurring again.
 - Use a family member's skills, knowledge, ideas and experiences when looking for improvement in her reactions to promote partnership and demonstrate consideration.
 - Not allow children to use the area until there is a strategy in place to avoid possible recurrence.

Part B

Read the second case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study 2

Renee is speaking to Anthea, who is a single parent. Anthea explains that due to medical issues she is unable to work at the moment and this has caused major financial pressures and isolation. She feels guilty that she can't provide her children with toys, books and outings.

1. Which of the following services and sources of information might Renee provide to support Anthea's situation appropriately? Select all that apply.
- Centrelink contacts and services
 - Local toy library brochure
 - Local library and playgroup contacts
 - Medical services, including the nurse on call service
 - Information about a local paediatrician
 - A list of ways parents can share their knowledge and expertise in an education and care service.

2. Renee decides to refresh the information available to families. What does she need to consider when she is looking for information? Select yes or no for each one.

- a. Renee needs to have resources on a variety of services in a variety of relevant languages. * Yes * No
- b. Renee needs to check that information is current. * Yes * No
- c. Renee needs to work out what resources specific families require rather than ask questions. * Yes * No
- d. Renee should constantly source and find new information to share with families. * Yes * No